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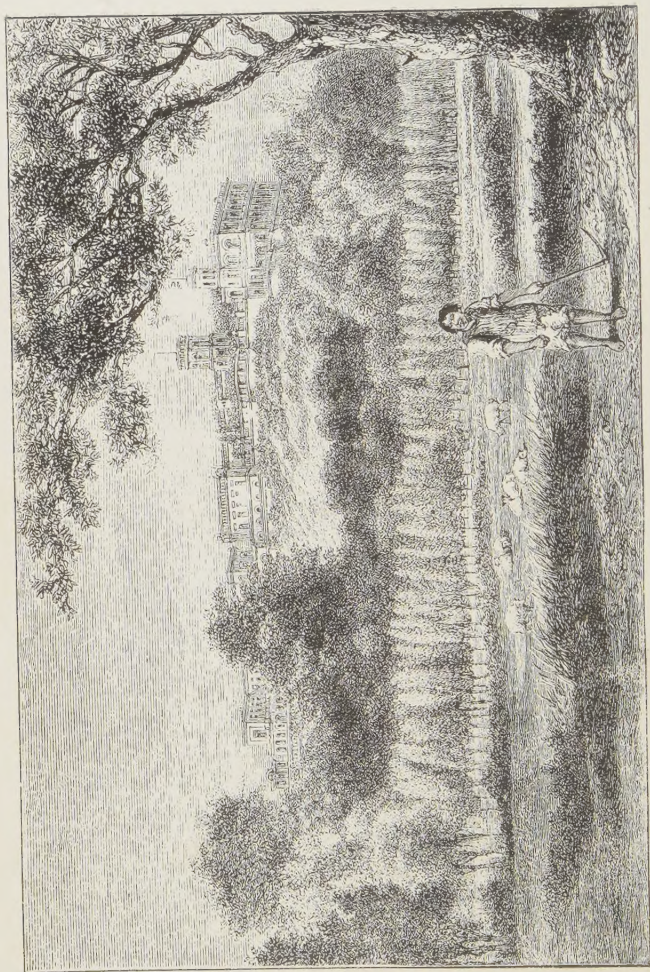
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THE CASTLE OF CHAPULTEPEC.

THE
LAND OF THE MONTEZUMAS

BY
CORA HAYWARD CRAWFORD]

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

TROY, N. Y.
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1889

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Nov. 5. 1889

TO MY MOTHER
THE COMPANION OF MY TRAVELS

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THE LAND OF THE MONTEZUMAS.

CHAPTER I.

EN ROUTE.

MONTHS of delightful travel have at length landed our indomitable party at the border-land of the ancient realm of the Montezumas, and promise to bring us to the realization of our desire to visit a foreign land—a land far more foreign, indeed, to our Anglo-Saxon ideas and customs than any of the cultured countries of civilized Europe, and as different as the holy cities of Palestine, or as Egypt under the Ptolemies.

En route we lingered long in the beautiful city of Denver, that gate-way to the marvelous mountain scenery of our American Alps, looking, as it does, on one side across the vast prairies stretching out for hundreds of miles between it and its sister cities of the East, and on the other to the rising foot-hills and proud peaks of the Rockies.

The trip out through Clear Creek Cañon gave us our first near view of these rugged mountains, bringing us to Central City and Black Hawk,

where we found ourselves in the midst of a great mining country. Here the sides of the mountains are fairly honey-combed with deserted shafts—sad monuments to the thousands who, during the first years of the gold-fever, swarmed westward, each with high hopes of immediately realizing the wealth of a Monte Cristo, only to return crushed and broken, or not to return at all. It is a country of wreck and ruin, where hopes have sunk deeper than the buried treasures so vainly sought; for the gold-dream has proved real only to a very few who have prospected here.

A wild drive was taken through Virginia Cañon to the little village of Idaho Springs which nestles in a narrow valley in the midst of the Rocky Mountains. The road descends more or less rapidly all the way, and it is the boast of the driver that he goes down this cañon in twenty minutes. As the distance is six miles, over a fair specimen of mountain road, rough and rocky, with many sharp turns overlooking great and dizzy depths, the sensations, mental and physical, were none too pleasant. The discomfort, however, soon outwearied us to such an extent that mental sensation of any kind became impossible, other than the vague impression that everything would soon go to pieces, and the consolation, equally vague, that no danger nor disaster could be any worse. One moment we are huddled together in a heap in the middle of the vehicle, now gaining a firmer grasp

on strap or rail in time to prevent a general scattering by the way-side. Now, by way of variety, our heads are dashed against opposing points, causing us to see stars that do not suggest thoughts of a heavenly character; and now our arms are almost jerked from their sockets as our bodies are hurled this way and that. One of us, overbold, ventures to suggest to the driver that he put on the brakes. "But we always go down this cañon in twenty minutes," was the reply; and what are a few broken bones and bruised heads in consideration for a reputation like that! So, with another snap of the whip, down we tumble into the very town itself, breathless and utterly surprised to find that chaos has not come again.

Another excursion, and one more pleasurable, was a drive from Georgetown up to Green Lake, singularly situated at the top of a mountain ten thousand feet above the sea. It is fed by springs innumerable, and undoubtedly is attributable to some convulsion of nature which caused a sudden sinking of the land, carrying with it the primeval forest, a part of which even now can be seen standing up from the bottom, and as scientists tell us, in a state of petrification. The lake is bordered by heavy cliffs wooded with a dark forest of pines that mirror themselves in the crystal waters, wonderfully clear, although of as rich green as the lights of the emerald, either from the character of its rocky setting or from some unusual refractive qualities.

At the farther end of this beautiful little lake is the Battle Ground of the Gods, where huge boulders and masses of rock are piled together in utter confusion, as if thrown there by the Titans who had rent the very mountains asunder for weapons in some mighty struggle for the supremacy of the universe.

On the little mountain of Belle View, near Central City, and which richly deserves the name for the outlook from its summit gives, indeed, an exquisite picture, there is a deep shaft into a mine once the property of three enterprising young men. We dropped stones into the opening and heard them striking against the sides, as they tumbled down, down, down, until all distinct sounds were lost, and only faint, rumbling and sorrowful echoes arose to our ears, as if the mingled voices of ghosts from the deep, dead past. The "blossom rock," an indication to miners of the probable presence of a vein, rises to the surface in several places here, and, without doubt, when the claim was taken it was thought to be one of great promise. At all events, every dollar the young men possessed, or could borrow or beg, they sank with the shaft into what seemed to them would prove their treasure house. For months they labored on, coming out at night worn with toil and anxiety and with hopes deferred, until another sun revived their courage, and they again followed their *ignis-fatuus*, fascinated by its brightness, and always seeming just

beyond their grasp. Finally, when nature could endure the wear and tear of mind and body no longer, one of them became insane, another committed suicide, while the third joined the multitude of tramps, a total wreck.

Colorado Springs we found to be a wonderfully refreshing town. Its wide, clean streets are shaded by beautiful trees which are nurtured by irrigating streams of running water turned for six hours alternately on either side of the streets. In this way, too, Denver has been converted from a desert-land into a forest city.

Manitou fascinated us with the beauty and infinite variety of its scenery. It lies in the very shadow of grand old Pike's peak, whose snow-crowned crest seems fairly to touch the vault of heaven. Between these two points are Cheyenne Cañon and the Garden of the Gods. The first is a picturesque cut between the mountains at the head of which a riotous mountain torrent comes tumbling down in seven continuous falls, dashing over the rocks some hundreds of feet and finally ending in a spray of white mist and foam. The beautiful flora of the Colorado country is seen in its gayest forms along this drive. There are whole fields of yellow daisies, clusters of scarlet poppies, and masses of flaming cacti intermingled with feathery ferns and the most delicate and soft tints of all sorts of dainty wild flowers.

The Garden of the Gods is an extremely curious

assemblage of natural monuments, sometimes more than two hundred feet high, and in every variety of form, now a group of cathedral spires, now a vast gate-way, again a colossal statue rearing its massive head to the very skies, its huge, brown pedestal buried in a field of deep red clay. These grand sentinels are of conglomerate formation, speaking plainly of an age when this section must have been a mountainous table-land long since washed away, except the cemented, rocky portions that have resisted the action of time and still remain standing.

At Manitou we took the train to Leadville, traveling through the glorious cañon of the Arkansas. This river boils and foams over its rocky bed through the wild and narrow gorges between the mountains rising grand and majestic above the tumultuous waters, in many places forming a perpendicular wall of granite from the river to the clouds. At one point the cut is so narrow that there was no possibility of building a road-bed, and the pass could only be made by suspending the track from an archway over the stream, using for abutments the mighty mountains themselves which here rise to a height of three thousand feet.

The scenery above Buena Vista is charmingly picturesque, but at Leadville there is a desolateness that is appalling in the extreme. The altitude is over eleven thousand feet above the level of the sea, and the rarity of the atmosphere caused us great discomfort. The town is rough, as only a

mining town can be. There is not a tree nor a shrub, nor even a bit of verdure for the eye to rest upon. Mines and mining make up the entire interest and industry of the place, and although clouded with the unenviable reputation of having for its chief amusements gambling, drinking and frequent affrays, it is now a growing town, with signs of social and business reform. Some of the mines at once "struck it rich," as the phrase goes, and are exceedingly prosperous, but many more failed, and the town collapsed, so that to-day, although steadily improving, it has not yet regathered a population equal to that of the first year after the great silver boom.

Our return was by way of South Park, a beautiful grass-grown valley surrounded and intersected by ridges rising now and then into noble mountains green with stately pines, except where a bold, bald peak points skyward far above the timber line. The country grows wilder as we near the Platte Cañon, and there is a subtle charm about the last day's ride towards Denver; it savors of a taste of paradise. The sun hangs low in the horizon as we near the city, and a golden effulgence streams over the land, slowly melting into purple, then fading into shadow and deepening into darkness; and night is on.

The crowning feature of all our Colorado trip was the ascent of Gray's peak, the highest accessible mountain in the United States, and in the

very heart of the wildest and grandest scenery of the Rockies. Preferring the drive rather than the newly completed railroad, we started early one bright morning from Georgetown, through a beautiful cañon and over a winding road between great boulders and odorous cedars, along frightful precipices and by the side of foaming cataracts, mountains and snow-silvered peaks ever rising above us and ever shifting and moving onward as we advanced. At length we reached the foot-hills, the stepping-stones by which we climb to the summit of Old Gray. Now in saddle we follow a trail which grows wilder and narrower, and then cuts in zigzag lines across the face of the mountain, up, up, it seems, to the very skies; but the peak still rears its lofty head into regions far above us. The sun grows hotter and the air colder every step as we proceed, yet onward we toil painfully and slow, over a path of broken stone scarcely two feet wide, and in breathless fear lest some misstep of an over-burdened horse hurl its rider into eternity; and oh! the dizzy glimpse into the far-off valley below! After hours of climbing we reach the last zigzag and turn a short corner upward at an angle seemingly almost perpendicular, and the summit is ours! Overcome by fatigue and exhausted from the rarity of the atmosphere at this great altitude, over fourteen thousand three hundred feet above the sea, we sink from our horses in an almost fainting condition. After a little rest, however, we

rally sufficiently to look about us, and our souls expand to the majesty and grandeur of the view spread out before us. The mountain is cone-shaped and its summit is only about thirty feet long by fifteen wide. At the very top is a roofless enclosure built up of rocks to serve as some protection against the piercing winds and blinding snow-storms that the traveler frequently encounters here, even in the months of July and August. Below us on the one hand is a gradual descent of some five thousand feet, while on the other there extends a rocky precipice down into space immeasurable. In that far-away valley we can see with the glass what appears to be a tiny lakelet, the head waters of Grand river, which flows into the Colorado and thence to the Pacific ocean. Below on the other side a rivulet, formed from the melting of the eternal snows, trickles out from the rocks, now swelling into Clear creek, then forming the Platte river beyond, whose waters empty into the Missouri,

"Flowing on and flowing ever,"

until finally they reach the Atlantic. Thus we stand on the very dome of the continent, the watershed between the two oceans, the skies above us and the world beneath.

Extending just to our right is Irvine, the twin peak of Gray, separated from it by a deep gorge filled with the snows of ages. Farther off on the other hand another hoary head arises almost to

our level, and, encircling the valleys between, on every side there arise peaks on peaks, their snowy crowns glistening in the noonday sun or purpling in the dim and far-off distance. Pike's peak is directly to the east ninety miles away; and beyond it a shimmering light defines the sandy shore of the waveless prairie-sea. Nearer, the verdant valley of South Park spreads out as a vast velvety robe of hunter's green, brocaded with light and shade. To the south arise the Spanish peaks, two hundred miles away, yet seemingly no farther than an arrow's range; while a hundred miles, perhaps, to the south-west stands the noble Mount of the Holy Cross, taking its name from the great cross appearing on its face and formed from deep intersecting gorges eternally filled with snow. Around toward the north,

"Like a silver serpent winding
Through the valley to the ocean,"

is a tracery of the Platte river, and over it at one point hovers

"A soft and purple mist
Like a vaporous amethyst."

This we recognize to be the smoke of Denver. Completing the circle are Long and James peaks joined by a belt of the silvery summits of the Snowy Range. No adequate idea can be given of the grand and glorious scene; no pen can describe it; no brush can paint it; hardly can the

human eye encompass a view so infinite in its variety and so endless in its vast extent. As our wavering pulses and rapid breathing warn us, the glory is too great for the earth-born, and with a sigh we again mount our dispirited horses standing with eyes closed, heads down-bent and nostrils distended, trying to feed their hungry lungs on the needed oxygen. No sense of the magnificence and grandeur of the view could reach their brutish brains as compensation for the terrors and fatigues of the journey.

The descent we discovered to be even more difficult than the upward trip, requiring constant bracing to keep in saddle, but fortunately it was more rapid, and with the darkness we found ourselves at Georgetown, totally exhausted but enriched with a picture that memory will carry forever.

After a second long stay in beautiful Denver the waning Autumn signals us to move southward, for

“The warm sun is failing,
The bleak wind is wailing,
The bare boughs are sighing,
The pale flowers are dying.”

In a few days we are at Las Vegas and begin to see and hear signs of Indian and Mexican influence. The air is here remarkably clear, as throughout all the elevated country of the West, and as a consequence distances are very deceptive. Of course

one of the first stories we hear is that of the man who, upon approaching an *acequia*, the Spanish for ditch, took off his boots, rolled up his trousers and prepared to wade across. On being asked why he did not step over, as the ditch was scarcely three feet wide, he replied: "I have been fooled so often by distances in this infernally deceptive country, that I can't trust the thing!" Probably he is the same man who attempted one morning to walk from Denver out to the mountains before breakfast, and found to his sorrow, after a fearfully long tramp in hunger and dirt, that they were fifteen miles distant. We do not mind a few dozen repetitions of these stories, but when they are given us as a steady diet, a sacred duty that every inhabitant of this country feels bound to perform the first five minutes after he meets a stranger, they somewhat pall upon us, and a weary look comes over our faces now whenever any one asks: "Have you heard of the man —?" Here we quietly depart and take a somewhat sweet revenge by telling the same to the next *gringos* we encounter, ringing the changes between this and the mule-reproduction anecdote. The length of time a man has been in this country can be easily determined by the degree of fatigue that spreads over his face when this subject is broached.

Las Vegas failed to interest us very much, but Vegas Hot Springs, a few miles up among the mountains, is a charming resort. There are beau-

tiful walks and drives up the cañon and out over the plains; and the country about is especially attractive to those fond of following unknown paths on the *mesa* and the dangerous trails over the mountains with a sprightly party on horseback.

Santa Fé we visited about Christmas time, and we were greeted by a light fall of snow, for although far south the elevated position makes the winters somewhat severe. The town is raggedly built of one-story, flat-roofed *adobe* houses. It is extremely poor and dirty, but there is a sleepy, foreign air about it, investing it with interest and carrying us back through the vista of the centuries to the time when the proud banner of Castile floated over her people.

In the still dimmer distance there stood here the stronghold and chief city of the Pueblo Indians, whose domain ranged at that time over a vast territory extending from the rich valleys of Colorado southward even into Mexico. After the conquest and subjugation of the Aztec nation an expedition was sent out by the King of Spain to explore Florida, whose unknown lands then extended from the Atlantic to the Mississippi. The fleet met with disastrous storms and was wrecked off the coast of Texas, and all but a handful of the command were lost, and only four of these survived the attacks of the hostile Indians along the shore. These four, led by Nuñez Cabeça, an officer of high rank in Spain, wandered for years eastward and

westward, returning at last to Mexico with wondrous tales of this people and their rich cities with houses of many stories, and of their thrift and dazzling wealth. One of these adventurous cavaliers traveled again northward with a friar, named Niza, who brought back still more marvelous tales of the country; and in 1540 one of the proudest expeditions ever fitted out for the wilderness of the New World set out to discover and conquer, in the name of God and Castile, the seven mythical cities of Cibola. Francisco Vasquez Coronado was the brave commander of this noble cortege. With hearts attuned to joyful measures, banners flying, bugles pealing, they marched forth into the distance, up the wild cañons of the Colorado, whose dark and dizzy depths had never before been gazed upon by the white man, on to the Gila, and on across Arizona to this point. Here they fought and converted the natives by fire and by sword, and claimed their allegiance henceforth to Spain; but the rivers flowing through beds of gold and silver, the valleys of sparkling rubies, and the mountains of opals, all these had vanished. Under the sacred name of Santa Fé the place became an important shipping point, and in time a proud city of the Spaniards.

Only an ancient church, a wretched *adobe* house, and the wrinkled and unsightly old women that throng the sidewalks, remain to tell the story of the grandeur of other days; yet there is an al-

luring fascination about its antiquity, and we ramble about the narrow streets and drive out to the fort, enjoying intensely the cold, crisp air and the bright sunshine. We inspect with eager interest the Mexican relics and Indian curios, and we revel in the traditions of the far-distant past. Lingered only long enough to gather up a few scraps of legendary lore, we hasten on southward, longing to reach the Land of the Montezumas, of which Santa Fé gives but a foretaste, and whets the appetite for more.

And now we are on its border, only the shallow, wide-spread waters of the Rio Grande flowing between, as we are told that the river flows beneath the sand, and this we are ready to believe, for surely most of its bottom is on top. It is a treacherous stream and frequently changes parts of its course in a single night. When this river formed the boundary between the United States and Mexico, along the whole line through New Mexico and into Arizona these sudden changes of river-bed caused much annoyance, for it was often the case that a village of Mexicans would go to sleep, safe in their native land, and awaken to find themselves in the lap of the United States, and *vice versa*. Such sudden changes of jurisdiction at the time, when the bitter edge of the Mexican war had not yet worn away, kept the border country in continual disturbance and ill-suppressed mutiny. Finally, in 1854, what is known as the Gadsden treaty

was made between the two countries, whereby Mexico received nine millions of dollars, at that time much needed, and the United States became enriched by the possession of the southern half of New Mexico and a large portion of Arizona, the border-line between the two nations moving south under the terms of the treaty to the present boundary.

CHAPTER II.

OVER THE BORDER.

EL PASO surpasses all of our expectations of the horrors of a border-town. It is desolation, dreariness and dust personified. The hotels are vile. Gambling is carried on as openly and much more generally than church-going in the East. We were one day much impressed by the lofty air with which a man came into the dining-room, seating himself near our table. On one side of his plate he laid a large revolver and a bowie-knife; on the other a bag of jingling coins. Then he proceeded to give his order with the importance of a lord. We supposed he must be a revenue officer, or some other dignitary, but upon inquiry we learned that he was a bunko-steerer or decoy-duck for one of the gambling dens. These places are said to realize an income greater than that of a prosperous gold mine, and with much less capital. In western parlance, "they make money hand over fist," and are, indeed, dens of iniquity.

The town is totally without shade or verdure of any kind, and the country about is barren as a

desert. There is not even pasturage enough in the vicinity to tempt a venturesome dairyman to settle here, notwithstanding the adjacent river, and the fact that the entire supply of milk, except the condensed article largely used in this town, is brought here from a distance by train. As traffic, in the winter-time especially, is always more or less obstructed by snows and wash-outs farther north, and as the trains are often more than twenty-four hours late, the supply is somewhat uncertain.

The climate is the only redeeming feature of the place; it is delightful, quite cold in the mid-winter season, but always bright, sunshiny and dry. For this we are thankful as we are waiting for passes, letters of introduction, and other necessary papers, before venturing farther south, strangers in a strange land; and we find ourselves fated to spend some little time here.

Naturally we hasten to visit Paso del Norte at the first opportunity, a Mexican town just across the river from El Paso, and connected with it by a tramway. Paso del Norte, or, as its name indicates, the "pass to the north," was an important fording place across the Rio Grande, a deceitful river and difficult to cross, long before the railroads had built up the American town. To us it is fascinating chiefly because it is over the border; and the witchery of a foreign land is upon us as we step from the car into the narrow streets of the quaint little village. It is a mere collection of

adobe huts lying in a somewhat luxuriant valley which, during the summer season, is green with outlying fields of clover and wild-grass, and gardens of vegetables. Its *acacias* are embowered with shade and fruit trees, and rich with clustering vines that yield abundantly, for the sandy soil is well suited to grape-raising. Great quantities of purple grapes are here converted into a variety of wines said to be of the richest quality and equal in flavor to any of the California wines.

The town seems always wrapped in the haze of a lazy afternoon. Here for the first time we see the native Mexican on his native soil. The men are arrayed in their gay *serapes* and wide-brimmed *sombreros*; and the women are wrapped, head and shoulders, in their *rebozas*. A few of these poor creatures offer images for sale, but generally speaking, the people sit before their mud dwellings industriously doing nothing. In the little plaza, or park, found in every Mexican village however humble, we see groups of men, women, and children half-reclining on the rickety benches, and basking in the rays of the winter sun, or seated on the scattering grass, gambling at dice. In the old church we find at work a few elderly women, their faces as wrinkled, yellow and leathery as the parchment bearing the records of the early days of New Spain, which for a small consideration they bring out for our inspection. These women are working in their crude way on the decorations for the altar, in

preparation for an approaching feast-day. In the midst is a vessel of a hissing-hot, resinous liquid which they are blowing through wooden tubes into branches of cedar, forming bubbles of prismatic colors amidst the green. The scene is so weird in this half-darkened anteroom, the faces of the women so seared and aged in contrast with their intense black eyes that one almost expects the walls to fade into a dismal cavern lighted suddenly by a sulphurous flame, showing the women rising to the dance of the witches and chanting:

“Double, double, toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and caldron bubble.”

On crossing the river a fierce-looking Mexican in official dress and carrying a brace of revolvers almost as long as his arm, somewhat after the style of our horse-pistol, entered the car, eying each passenger, and opening every suspicious-looking bundle or basket, to the sorrow of any would-be smuggler. This incident only heightened our desires to try our own good fortune in attempting to elude the tariff laws of our country. So, on our return, the men filled their pockets with choice weeds, and we made liberal use of every receptacle that would hold a piece of the quaint pottery we found for sale in the little den-like shops. Fortunately we had been warned that the American officials are in civilian dress, and quietly perform their duties without making themselves known;

otherwise, some of our party might have had an experience similar to that of a gentleman who, having crossed the river, thought himself safe with his box of smuggled cigars, and on bringing them out to treat his friends an officer from the corner of the car quietly requested his company to the custom-house. This smuggling by means of the street-car, however, is very small, the natives doing their work by fording the river at night, and even though under constant surveillance they often succeed in safely landing whole wagon-loads of contraband goods. At less exposed points along the river the business of smuggling is said to be carried on extensively. The excessive rates of duty on the necessities of life, and the high prices of home-products make it a temptingly profitable, though precarious industry.

The wagons in use, if purely Mexican, are curiosities, for they are all carts. They are constructed entirely without the use of iron, each of the wheels being sawed, or hewn from a huge log, through the centres of which there passes a wooden apology for an axle-tree. On this rests a square, crib-like bed enclosed with rough rails. This vehicle, a relic of early days, is drawn by oxen yoked together by a crude cross-bar lashed to their horns, and to the tongue of the cart.

Paso del Norte is the northern terminus of the *Farrocarril Central Mexicano*. The construction of this road was an event of vast importance to

Mexico, connecting, as it does, in one continuous line the City of Mexico with the northern borders, giving an impetus long needed to its commerce and making an easy, pleasant voyage for the tourist, who desires to visit that noble city with its relics of a fallen race. This road was built by American capital and received from the Mexican government some grants of land along the line, and promises of subsidies to be obtained from a certain percentage of the import taxes. This contract, however, has been a source of discussion and trouble ever since the first train started, the government being more generous in promises than prompt in payment.

Our arrangements are at last completed, and sufficient funds for the trip exchanged into *adobe* dollars and City of Mexico bills. This exchange is exceedingly pleasing to us, as loyal Americans, inasmuch as for every good American dollar we receive a dollar and twenty cents in Mexican money. Then with no regrets, save the farewell to a newly made friend, the hectic flush of whose cheeks we know will fade before our return, we depart from El Paso and slowly steam across the river. Officers enter the car to examine the hand baggage, but they open the satchels of two only of the passengers who bear unmistakable marks of being the "perfect fid" merchants of ready-made clothing, and who really create suspicion by trying to look innocent. At the station our trunks undergo a

form of examination carried on very courteously, and then as the

“Golden sun is slowly, slowly
Sinking in the purple distance,”

we bid our native land good-night, and are fairly on our way to the Land of the Montezumas. Through the gathering dusk of evening we can see on each side of our track a vast stretch of desert rising into barren sand-hills, and spotted with deposits of alkalies white as snow. A few mesquite bushes and occasional yuccas, or cacti, are the only signs of vegetation.

Before the advent of the railroads an old wagon-trail plowed its weary way across these sandy plains, and the terrors of the trip were subjects for serious consideration in former days when to the dreariness of the desert were added the dangers arising from frequent marauding bands of Apaches who infested this district. Turning from the dark and gloomy scene outside, and from the shuddering remembrance of tales of the murderous attacks of these savage Indians, to the bright comfort and warmth of our sleeper, we find that an animated discussion is going on between an American capitalist and a Mexican trader just returning from a visit to the States. The question at issue is that of the continuance of silver currency at the present ratio of value, the great depreciation of Mexican moneys being the *raison d' être* of the argument. From finance the talk drifted into politics

and the condition of the present government, then to railroads, their interests and growth.

For years the only internal communication was by means of the crude, lumbering carts, or on horseback, these being superseded by a system of diligences for passenger travel. In 1837 the first line of railroad to run from the City of Mexico to Vera Cruz was chartered; but the grant was forfeited for failure to commence work within the specified time. Other grants were issued but the country was so torn up by constant revolutions and changes of government that it was many years before any active work was begun. The difficulties of construction, and the immense projects of engineering required, also caused much delay; and it was not until 1869 that the first branch was opened, and with a flourish of trumpets; the whole line was completed and opened to the public in 1873. Other companies soon followed, and within the last ten years several roads have been commenced and completed, and Mexico is now well supplied with iron roads of travel, intersecting the border at various points and converging to the capital city as a common centre.

A long whistle interrupts us here, followed by the jostle of slackening wheels, and then a dead stop. Stepping out on the platform we find the moon has risen and is shedding her glimmering light over the mud shanties of a village where we have halted for water. Groups of loungers and

beggars, in the picturesque though ragged costumes of the country, cluster about the train, and the scene is so weird and strange that one feels that it must be some stage effect of the ancient mysteries he is looking upon. In the broad light of day the pitiable poverty is but too apparently real, but in this magical light the harsh points are silvered with a touch of romance. A striking characteristic of the country lies in the constant reminders of the far East. There is an oriental effect in much of the landscape, in the primitive methods of husbandry, in the flowing garb of the people, and in their dashing ease in horsemanship; while the swarthy faces and piercing black eyes vividly recall the descriptions of the Egyptians and Bedouins of the Arabian deserts.

CHAPTER III.

FIRST STOP IN MEXICO.

WITH the early morning Chihuahua, the first city of importance on the line, is reached. It is situated in a valley enclosed to the south and east by the embracing arms of the Sierra Madre mountains, and seems to us to be a well-built town, with wide, clean streets. Although the larger number of the dwellings are plain and often miserably poor, one and two-story adobe cabins, there are also numerous handsome houses of plastered adobe, as well as many noble edifices built of stone. The city is in a rich mining country from which streams of silver have flowed, and at the time of greatest prosperity it had a population much greater than at the present day. The houses are all built in hollow squares about an open court, where we sometimes catch glimpses of dancing fountains and brightly blooming flowers, and, occasionally, of a fair-faced, black-eyed beauty, almost instinctively reminding one of the lines of Byron :

“O night,
And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
Of a dark eye in woman.”

One rarely gets more than a glance at these fair donnas, for they seldom appear on the public streets; but about the station, up the principal thoroughfares, and in the plaza, can always be seen throngs of the common people, and men and women of our own race are often met here, for there is considerable of an American element in this place. This fact is readily discernible at the hotels where our customs have been introduced, but after a cheaply civilized fashion that still leaves much to be desired.

The grand plaza, always a very notable feature in every Mexican town, is surrounded on three sides by handsome public edifices and stores, and on the fourth side stands the Cathedral. This imposing structure, famous for its magnificent carvings and its architectural beauty, a combination of the Moorish and modern Gothic, was erected when our Republic was struggling through the first uncertain years of its infancy. It is of light stone, with an over-arching dome, and two high towers offering magnificent and beautiful views. Our visit was made in the evening when the vesper bell was sounding, and the scene, half-lighted by the flickering candles which grew brighter as the daylight waned, was one never to be forgotten, with its weird contrast between the gorgeous robes of the officiating priest, blending with the gay decorations of the altars, and with its picture of men and women, barefooted and in rags, sitting and kneeling on the floor below.

The principal buildings of interest, besides the churches, are the prison and the mint, formerly a convent, from whose tower Hidalgo, the Washington of Mexico, was taken and shot by the Spaniards. A simple monument of white stone marks the spot where fell this first martyr to Mexican independence. We are satisfied with an outside view of the prison, whose gloomy walls and grated windows remind us of an ugly custom which the natives of these border states have had of sending off a citizen to the *calaboza* on the slightest pretense, not from any intended injustice, but simply because it was the practice of the country. Once there, he was liable to remain until worn and "rusted with a vile repose," for justice, like all things else in this land of ease, moves exceeding slow. An acquaintance once seeking renewed health in this very city came very near suffering from this inconvenient custom, because he had chanced to be the last one seen to leave a shop from which some articles were declared stolen. He was immediately seized by the police, and this surprising dilemma called forth more Spanish from his lips than he had ever imagined himself capable of uttering. This effort, together with the fact that the missing goods were fortunately soon discovered, effected his release without further trouble; and "he sped on his way rejoicing, and revisited his friends," as did Æneas, dismissed by the Sibyl through the ivory gate, from the nether regions.

Efforts have lately been made to correct this evil, however, and minor officials have received orders from headquarters to treat foreigners with especial courtesy, and examine into any charges made against them with particular care.

The plaza is grass-grown and richly adorned with beds of flowers, winding walks, benches and pillars of white porphyry, the whole being shaded by overhanging trees. One loves to linger here in the freshness of the early morning, listening to the twitterings of birds in the boughs overhead, and watching the dusky faces of the passers-by, worshippers hurrying to early mass, beggars entreating alms, fruit-sellers with great baskets of fruit on their heads, bread-dealers, peddlars and dulce-venders carrying their wares after the same fashion, and *aguadores* filling their stone jars at the central fountain. In the evening the scene is still fuller of life and interest, for a concourse of people of all classes gather here to while away the time and listen to the sweet strains of Mexican music. Eyes grow bright under stolen glances and sly hand-clasps, and in spite of the presence of grim *duennas* there is animation and love and happiness here.

The city is abundantly supplied with water by means of a massive stone aqueduct some three miles long, and more than a hundred years old. Near its termination in the city is the *alameda*, or promenade, beyond which a road leads to a suburb of stately houses and fine, wall-bound gardens.

After a few days of sight-seeing about the town one of our party proposed a trip to the Eulalia silver mines, and after some discussion about ways and means we have finally decided to start as soon as possible after sunrise on the morrow. Santa Eulalia is about fifteen miles from Chihuahua, and the rough but interesting ride out over the country is to be made in a vehicle apparently constructed long before the invention of springs, and behind four shaggy but fiery little animals only too ambitious to reach their journey's end. A brown-faced Mexican is engaged for driver, while an acquaintance familiar with the trip volunteers to be our guide.

It is a December morning, but it suggests to us our northern June. Armed and equipped, as well as may be, for the journey, we are off, feeling very foreign and very Mexican. As we ride out of Chihuahua in the glare of the sun there seems a something almost fierce in the brightness of the morning. In the shadows of the white houses of the long, bare street it is chilly, almost cold, and the sunny patches hot by contrast bring one a grateful sensation of warmth. The great pyramidal shadow of Sierra Colonel lies still along the grass-brown slopes that stretch away in a pleasant plain to the Nombre de Deos mountains, flaming red, as they are glowing already in the morning sun. Sierra Grande, like a mighty sentinel rises in our rear, bare as the plain from base to crown.

The dusty roadway is straight and vanishes away beyond the knolls, between which the dust, stirred up by earlier travelers, hangs purple in the sun. Afar the glinting walls of some white adobe shine out with a dry, clear light, relieved against the dull brown, grassy, sandy hills. The natives tell us that in August these hills are all emerald-green, but to-day it seems incredible, for the one great, all-pervading thought is that of the sun, almost terrible as it searches out even the shadows in time and lends them a golden color too.

On either hand, as we rattle along, huge piles of coal-black slag lie like grim ruins of some active past. Wonder grows upon us as we ride among these vast slag heaps. It seems impossible that they are the works of man. Already one is tempted to conclude that these great heaps that scar the plain and choke the dry stream-beds are but remnants of volcanic lavas piled away from the roads by human hands, or slacked and weathered away by time. Where could it ever have come from? Was there ever ore enough in all this region to account for this incalculable quantity of black cinder? "Well, we are to see after awhile," our guide says, and so we ride cheerfully along under the bare, sunny and precipitous crown of Sierra Colonel.

How balmy and soft is the wind that comes down from the bare mountains! Even the sun cannot rob it of its delightful freshness. To the

north of us is the hurrying rush of the unrestful world; there it is the nineteenth century; here the only thing to suggest the idea of haste is the long line of the Mexican Central Railway stretching like a great sinuous snake along the base of the far-away hills. We mount a low ridge that comes down from our sentinel mountain, and here we stop a moment to rest and listen to the descriptions of our guide who, lifting his hand, points away to the south and east where rise the Santa Eulalia mountains. A wide plain lies in between—fifteen miles of almost unbroken desert, dusty and hazy with unfettered sunlight.

There lies the Hacienda Müller, a German palace in a Spanish waste. The house, we are told, cost one hundred thousand Mexican dollars. It is adobe for the most part, with incredible marble front and pillars. We ride near and find six men on a wheat-stack flat and round as a pancake. They are tossing the dry chaff in air to be blown away by the wind. They work like crazy men, and, discovering an American thrashing-machine lying idle under a shed near by, we conclude that these men are maniacs indeed.

But the distant range of Santa Eulalia attracts us, and we dash away over the rugged road, having some thirty miles to ride before night-fall. What an endless journey it is, with the goal in sight all the while, and the little black speck on the mountain side, said to be the main opening of the Santa

Eulalia mines, growing slowly plainer to view! At last, after a discouragingly weary ride, we arrive, hot and dusty, and immediately take to the shade to cool off, while the gentlemen of the party drink *pulque* in evident enjoyment.

Now we go under-ground with the *mayordomo*, who is very obliging and seems glad to see us. Soon we emerge from the long drift which enters the face of the mountain—emerge after a quarter of an hour's groping in the dark, with the flaring torches ever blowing their foul smoke in our faces—into a huge, high-vaulted chamber which extends on all sides into impenetrable darkness.

We understand and believe at a glance, by the impressive vastness of this cavernous hall, that all the slag-piles seen on our journey had their origin here, and that in very fact they are the works of man. It is awful, even depressing at first. So through a dozen such chambers we may go, if you will; but only the same vast excavations, dull walls and fearful silences await us. The very heart and substance of the mountains seem removed—so vast are some of these mighty caves. Verily the whole city of Chihuahua was built from these great mines, famous from ancient times, two hundred and more years ago. The vast slag-piles at and about this city are eloquent witnesses of the vast amount of ore smelted from Santa Eulalia, and although many attempts have been made by different companies to recover the silver of these

slags they have no value above four dollars per ton, and cannot yet be utilized. The Mexican knew how to smelt his ore. One need only to visit Santa Eulalia to see what man will attempt in the shape of a mine. The ores are lead ores, and have been mined in vast chambers large enough to take in the Chihuahua Cathedral, spires off. No one can help being immeasurably impressed with the awful immensity of the place. To-day the mines are little worked, and stand a monument of past greatness. The whole country about the city is a grave-yard, with slag-dumps for monuments.

The Real de Santa Eulalia is a rude little village tucked into a fold between the mountains, and composed of adobe huts and haciendas, all one story, except the ever-present church. The class of peons here is of a lower order than any we had yet seen. They are dirtier and darker and more savage in appearance, while the children, running about in a true state of nature, stare at us too wickedly for pure innocence. The mountains for miles about are seamed with silver, and over two hundred mines have been actively worked here, many of them to great depths. They originally belonged to the Church, and in the early days the yield of the precious metals was so enormous that with the proceeds of a small tax on their products the beautiful Cathedral we visited yesterday was built, not to mention other vast extravagances. After the expulsion of the Spaniards these mines were aban-

done as exhausted, but it is more than probable that some enterprising company, probably American, will open up new veins here, and with the added help of modern machinery will be amply rewarded for their labors.

The story of the first discovery of this great wealth of metals is one of romantic interest. Three fugitives, obliged for the good of their precious necks to take refuge in the mountain fastnesses, had finally found safe quarters in a deep ravine of what is now known as the Santa Eulalia mountains. Here they one day built a roaring bonfire, using for supports some of the bowlders lying about. These became intensely heated, and, to the surprise and joy of the fugitives, gave off a shining, white metal which they recognized to be silver. Prospecting, they soon discovered evidences of large quantities of rich ore, and their fortunes were assured. Pardons and absolutions were now easily obtained; the mines were opened, people flocked to them, and the section soon became famous for its wealth of metals.

After luncheon, taking horses, we canter up a sinuous path for a favorable view of the surrounding country. Onward and upward we wind and climb by a narrow trail which suddenly turns off to the left, and we find ourselves on the edge of a wild precipice. An old adobe house stands here clinging to the bleak terrace, and now our guide informs us that this is the entrance to the San

Domingo mine, from which the wealth of a Cræsus has rolled forth. We only see a black hole in the solid rock. But turning to the valley we have a view inexpressibly beautiful and grand. There are ranges of mountains, multitudes of peaks, and glimpses of tangled valleys enveloped in an atmosphere almost opalescent with shining light. Over our path the mountain towers with a darkling frown. It is nature in her wildest mood. Yet such is man, and the heart of man, that from all this grandeur we turn with a longing glance toward this dark hole leading into the inner depths where millions lie hidden. So numerous indeed are the tales of wondrous wealth here that we are getting a touch of the mining fever, though not in a degree likely to prove fatal.

And now, late in the afternoon, we ride toward the city of Chihuahua, and see from afar the spires of the Cathedral lifted above the hazy plain, and reddening in the evening sun. This is the Orient now, and the tropical splendor of the south as well. From the Nombre de Deos mountains to the Sierras on the west, every peak and rugged crown aloft seems all aglow with fire, while the nearer heights of Sierra Grande and Sierra Colonel are flushed with light, with both their tops wrapped round with rosy flame. The way is long and rough, and with the gathering darkness we look wary and ill at ease, seeing real or imaginary dangers beyond every curve, the more so because of

the stories, which one of our company persists in telling for our amusement, of the banditti once infesting this country and even recently attacking belated travelers. And so, worn and weary to the soul from excitement, anxiety and fatigue, we welcome the sight of the Cathedral towers with feelings akin to those with which a pious Mohammedan pilgrim hails those of his sacred Mecca. The city is bathed in the light of the full moon, and all things are silvered and purified in her blue-white rays; and we gaze long and fondly upon the beautiful scene, knowing this to be our farewell, as with the morning we are again to travel southward.

CHAPTER IV.

ZACATECAS.

AGAIN we are traversing broad plains that stretch out to meet the sky on every side, fringed over against the horizon with purple peaks,

“Far vague and dim,”

ever shifting and changing, now falling into low, rolling hills, now rising in snowy crests faintly luminous in the distance. The strong Egyptian character of the country and of the people constantly impresses one, and brings to mind the myth of the Lost Atlantis.

Much of the land is brown and arid at this season, and the herbage is coarse and unattractive. The cañi increase in size and prevalence as we approach the tropical regions, and whole forests of hideous, repellent overgrowths frequently sweep past. But there are miles of rich fields also, which by irrigation yield, in this land of perpetual spring, two full crops a year. These are the haciendas, or ranches, vast estates sometimes containing two hundred square miles of agricultural, grazing or mineral lands, properties ducal in extent

and value, for the wealth in Mexico is in the hands of a comparative few, while the great part of the population is too miserably poor to hope or even to wish for more than a bare subsistence.

Universal suffrage and popular elections are a farce, and as yet altogether impossible, the affairs of government being determined by the party in power, and carried on practically by military authority, even in these times of peace. The thriving, prosperous middle class, which makes up the larger number of the inhabitants of most countries, and which is the ruling power in the United States, is here almost a nonentity. This fact is due somewhat to the system of taxation in Mexico, which imposes a levy on merchandise, rather than on land and dwellings. Houses not occupied, or lands not under cultivation, are exempt, while merchandise is taxed by every state through which it travels. Then, too, the land granted in large tracts by the Crown after the Spanish Conquest, has come down from generation to generation generally undivided and seldom changing hands. The owners of these immense farms rarely live on them, generally having palatial residences in or near a city, and entrusting the management to a superintendent whose house, together with a miserable little village of adobe huts for the peons, or laborers, occupies a part of the estate. Sometimes, however, the owner lives in the midst of his miles of land, a supreme ruler of a little world of his

own. His handsome villa is conducted in courtly magnificence. Masses of flowers, the songs of birds and the music of the voice and guitar lend their beauty to the charm of culture and refinement, while riding, dancing, and the ever-present cigarette, add gayety and amusement—a life complete in itself and entirely isolated from the outside world. It is a sort of feudal community, little less than serfdom, for the peons are practically in a state of bondage for debt, although these poor laborers have the right to select their own masters. In the event of dissatisfaction they may change their allegiance and sell their service, and that of their families, to any one who will pay the sum they owe to their last employer. Yet their attachment to the soil of their native villages, much of which they have with them always, is so great that they seldom change masters.

It is with great difficulty that laborers can be found to work for any considerable distance on the railroad beds when in process of construction. They can only be persuaded to do so by allowing their families to accompany them, a similar privilege to that granted by the government to the soldiers when on the march. There are other strong attachments among the poor people, causing great annoyance to railroad officials: the lower orders of peons require to be carefully watched in order to keep them from appropriating anything they can lay their hands on, even to the iron couplings;

and trainmen are said to be held responsible for every link, bolt, or burr on their trains in order to keep them on their guard sufficiently to prevent their trains from becoming badly derailed.

We were, in some instances, an hour in crossing one of these estates by rail, where we saw men raising water from wells or reservoirs into irrigating ditches, or at work in the field with a primitive wooden plow, just as might have been seen in Egypt a thousand years ago. The crowds of beggars that gathered around the train wherever we stopped, some of them horribly deformed or covered with leprous sores, also brought to mind the interesting book up the hill that Warner has given us.

The picturesque is everywhere present, even in spite of the poverty. The Indian woman wrapped to the eyes in her blue rebozo, the fruit vendor with his gay escape and wide-brimmed hat surmounted by a giant basket of richly colored fruits, the passing horseman with his silver-burnished leggings and spurs and short-brided jacket, and his elegantly saddled steed, the numerous babies nestled in their mothers' robes, these to us are all novel and full of interest. The landscape, however, has ceased to be inviting for all day long, and still again on the morrow there is nothing but the same vast expanse of table-land. At length, to our pleasure, the road makes a *détour* and enters the rough country about Zacatecas.

We are now called to a point of observation on the platform and we find that the scene has changed. From the dull monotony of the plains we have entered upon a bit of glorious mountain country, recalling our most extravagant memories of the Rockies, only that the cañi, the yucca and the mesquite take the place of the noble cedars and pines of the Colorado mountains. Circling dizzy curves, climbing steep grades, and whirling through water-washed cañons, we come in sight of Zacatecas, the highest city on the road, having an altitude of nearly eight thousand feet, and so closely environed by the mighty mountain cliffs of solid rock that one wonders how its seventy-five thousand people can get air and food enough to sustain life. Water is so scarce as to be a luxury, and during the long, dry months of the rainless season it is sold at a stated price per barrel. No system of drainage here is as yet possible.

It seemed that every able-bodied man, woman and child of this city, and certainly every infant in arms, was about the station, sitting on the overlooking ledges, huddling together along the narrow defile through which the trains come and go, and standing in motley throngs wherever opportunity favored, not in honor, however, of our arrival, as one of our company suggested, but to see off a train-load of their friends and relatives just starting on a pilgrimage to the shrine of some neighboring city. To many of them this was their first

ride on the Farrocarril, and it was a great event for them, as well as for their friends who watched them start—a great, mixed mass of humanity, for the most part wretchedly poor and in rags. They had commenced to disperse as we alighted from our coach, yet it was with the greatest difficulty that we made our way through the throng to the tramway that was to take us to our stopping-place.

Street-cars are a great institution in Mexico. There are always two grades of cars, a first-class and a second-class, each drawn by mules, the second-class car painted green and running about half a square in advance of the yellow, or first-class car. The fare on the latter is about double that charged on the former, first-class fare in the city limits being generally a *medio*, or six and a quarter cents; sometimes a *real*, the English bit, is charged, and for long distances, two *reals*. Before learning the rules of tramway-travel we had, on one occasion, a rather laughable experience, for we had entered the *green* car, this being undoubtedly the better suited to our experience, if not to our tastes. There were men of the roughest class, all smoking their cigarettes, women with their baskets of clothes or of goods for the market, not to mention their babies in arms, nor their ragged children beside them. One of these, a wag of some ten years, began to remark about "*los americanos*," in such way as to bring laughter from all of the Mexicans in the car. This, together with questioning looks

turned upon us, gave us to understand that something was wrong, although it was some time before we could be made to appreciate the situation. Finally the truth dawned upon us, and, to the amusement of the other passengers, we alighted and took our places in the *yellow* car following, where we found a very different class of people. The Mexican, with his trace of the chivalric blood of Spain, does not lose his politeness, even in a street-car, always rising to give a lady a seat, and frequently stepping from the platform to gracefully help her on or off.

There is a somewhat unique line of cars running through a narrow gorge from Zacatecas to the suburban town of Guadalupe, about four miles distant, and so much lower that the cars run there by gravity, mules being used on the ascending trip only. Many of the men doing business in the city have their homes there, because of the purer air and the more healthful surroundings, consequently there is a great deal of travel between the two places, and the line is a well-paying one.

Zacatecas is a busy, thriving city, and its narrow, tortuous and irregular streets teem with animation. Its principal interests lie in the great silver mines, some of which are exceedingly rich; but it has also a commercial importance as a distributing centre for the whole surrounding country. Of course our first visit was to the Cathedral, for, as in all Catholic countries, the Church in Mexico

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has absorbed much of the wealth, and even amidst the most abject poverty it has found means, not always as divine as that by which Moses caused water to flow from the dry rock, but means sufficient to extract streams of gold with which to erect stately edifices of her power. In the name of the Church and of Castile the first great conquest of the country was made, when the Cross, side by side with the proud banner of Spain, was carried through a scene of carnage and murder, until finally planted on the ruins of the empire of the Montezumas. At the point of the sword, and through torture by fire and the rack, the natives were brought into a semblance of Christianity, although at heart they are still as pagan as when they worshiped their idols of stone, and sacrificed human victims on the altars of their gods. In exchange for their rude images the Church gave them the crucifix and the statue of the Virgin, and for their bloody sacrifices she gave them the Mass, but she left their untutored minds and hearts in ignorance as deep as in the olden days, and to the superstitions of the ancient Aztecs she but added those of modern Rome.

In the affairs of government the Church no longer has power, for with the death of Maximilian her control over the state ended. Much of her property was confiscated to meet the public demands; the confessionals were thrown open and the priests forbidden to appear on the streets in

the robes of their order, but nevertheless they still hold the great mass of the people, as with a rod of iron, to the forms and ceremonies of their religion. Yet in three hundred years they have failed to eradicate the errors in which they found them; for no one can doubt, after visiting the churches of Mexico, but that heathenism, idolatry and rank superstition remain as before, the forms only being changed. The old love of pomp and display is as strong as in the days when Cholula instead of Rome was the sacred city, and the pagan spirit still taints the festivities of their religion. One ceremony truly unique is thus described by Ober:

“I witnessed several festivities while in the country, but none seemed to me more grotesque and curious than that of Good Friday, when a final disposition was made of the arch-traitor Judas, against whom the Mexicans seem to have a special spite, and wreak their vengeance upon him in a number of ingenious ways. All day long the men are parading the streets with effigies of the betrayer hanging from poles, and hundreds are sold, especially to the children who blow up these images with a gusto and delight only paralleled by our small boy on the Fourth of July. Each image, made of *papier-maché*, is filled with explosives, and has a fuse like a firecracker, and is touched off by the juveniles amid great rejoicing. The thing culminates at evening, when great Judases are hung up at prominent places, generally

at the intersection of the streets, and exploded in the presence of delighted crowds. Then, also, the bells in the towers ring out their chorus of rejoicing, and a peculiar apparatus, also in the cathedral tower, makes a loud, crackling noise, which the crowds understand well means the breaking of the bones of the thieves on the cross."

The same writer quotes the Spanish proverb: "*Tras la cruz esta el diablo*" (the devil lurks behind the cross), and he goes on to say, "nowhere is this more true than in Mexico." Indeed, one is constantly reminded of it when so many crimes are committed under the permission of a power that sells indulgences, and grants immunity from danger to the poor peon who will pay his scanty *tlacos* for the blessed wafers, which we very frequently see them wearing on their pulsing temples. These religious delusions have the appearance of pieces of colored court-plaster, and before learning their significance we supposed it to be a style similar to that which raged in England during Queen Elizabeth's reign, and which even in our own day is sometimes indulged in, on a smaller scale, by the affected. How happy would we be if such additions to the toilette would only ward off all dangers of plague, famine and disease, as the poor, blinded peon is made to believe when he wears his colored wafers blessed by the priest.

Talking of these things, fortunately in a language the natives could not understand, we toiled

up to the spot where stands the noble Cathedral of Zacatecas, on a point so high that it is the first and the last thing one sees of the city. It is of a rich, brown stone, and very beautiful with the great masses of magnificent carving on the façade, which we stood long to admire, together with the grand view of the city and surrounding country gained from the elevated position of its portals. The interior is almost startling from the prevalence of white and gold in the decorations, a combination doubtless very beautiful in the eyes of the native worshipers, but unpleasant to the more refined tastes that prefer the simplicity of quiet elegance to the gaudy effects of strong contrasts in colors.

From the small chapel on the summit of the *Bufa* a still more extended view is obtained of the entire valley enclosed by rolling hills which rise, bleak and barren, into a spur of the Sierra Madre mountains. "This hill is curiously composed of a variety of igneous rocks lying in close contiguity, and the geological formation of this section," says Humboldt, "somewhat resembles that of Switzerland."

We visited also the State House, the market, and the mint which is second only to that of the City of Mexico in its coinage, leaving the mines and various other places of resort for another day's ramble.

With renewed energies on the morrow we sought the mines, of which there are many in and

about the city, although they are not as extensive as others in the state of Zacatecas, which is one of the oldest mining districts in the country and very rich. The largest mine in the city is the San Rafael; and the oldest is the Cortes, about two miles away, and was discovered not many years after the great general, whose name it bears, had burned his ships behind him, and with his little army of intrepid adventurers had conquered an empire.

The descent into most of the mines here is made by means of a series of ladders, and it is with considerable hesitation that one trusts himself to go down into the mysterious depths of the yawning pit, with the crowds of brigandish-looking workmen moving about here and there in a little circle of dim, wavering light beyond which reigns the blackness of darkness. A trusty escort, however, and the polite and apparently sincere reassurances of the guide, revived the waning courage of one of the gentlemen of our party, and down, down he clambered into the bowels of the earth.

The labyrinth of galleries and tunnels extends for miles, sometimes so narrow that men scarcely have room to pass with their loads of ore, and often so shallow that they are compelled to crawl upon their hands and knees as they work into their leads, breaking the rock and carrying it either on their backs or by burros to the main shaft, whence it is hauled out and taken to the reduction works. There was opportunity only for a cursory glance,

for both time and desire combined to press our companion to the surface, after a brief experience in this dungeon of discomfort and danger. Verily life must be a burden to these poor peon miners, who spend twelve hours a day in these dismal caves where nature has hidden her treasures, delving with pick and spade, and scarcely ever seeing the golden sunlight, which seemed to us never to shine with such glorious radiance as when at last we were safe returned from this mouth of darkness to the bosom of a brighter scene.

CHAPTER V.

A MEXICAN RESORT.

ONWARD we sweep through the ragged hills to the widening valleys, broad meadows and cultivated fields of the state of Aguas Calientes, onward to its capital, whose bubbling springs of hot water from nature's fountains give the name to both the state and the city. The reputation of this place as a delightful resort, pleasantly situated and famed for its salubrious climate, had induced us to arrange for a considerable stay here. And, although the narrow, unattractive streets through which we passed for a considerable distance, on the way from the station to the hotel, promised poorly, we at length reached the better portion of the city, opening out into the beautiful plaza. Overlooking this is our *posada*, a quiet hotel, in which we are well satisfied to settle down for a rest, and for an opportunity to study to advantage both the people and their language.

The Plaza House is a large, one-story adobe building, entered through an imposing-looking gate and archway into an open court decorated with shrubbery and flowers, and surrounded by a

broad gallery. On this each suite of rooms opens, ours consisting of one large chamber on the court and two inner rooms with small, heavily grated and shuttered windows looking out on the street. They were pleasantly furnished with antique dressers and brass bedsteads. Because of the danger of vermin in this semi-tropical climate and sandy soil, iron or brass bedsteads are universally used by the better classes, while the very poor are glad enough to get a bed of matting to sleep upon. The service of the hotel is good, but the method of calling for attendance by the clapping of hands, instead of ringing a bell, seems oriental in the extreme.

Although the nights are cold in this high altitude, especially in these thick-walled, high-ceilinged adobe houses, there is no place whatever for fire in the rooms, except in the great brick range of the culinary department. Mexicans have a prejudice against the use of artificial heat in this climate, and not a fire-place, other than for cooking purposes, did we see in the Republic, unless in the far northern states, or in the homes of foreigners.

The proprietor of the Plaza is an American, but the *mozos*, or servants, are all Mexican, and the restaurant strictly so. Everything is served in courses, no two dishes at a time, and an ordinary Mexican dinner has fifteen or more *entradas*. Soup comes first and is generally good, then the meats, and so on through a variety of dishes mostly un-

known to American *menus*, and often so hot with *chile*, a Mexican pepper, as to be unpleasantly suggestive of fire and brimstone; while *chile con carne*, a sort of larded hash compounded of many meats and chile, was first used, according to Mexican mythology and our confirmed belief, on the tables of the gods of the under world. Very fair bread, or a variety of breads, *pan*, *pan dulce*, *pan moreno*, is served mostly in small loaves, and generally must be eaten without butter, as this commodity is almost unknown in Mexico. An apology for butter may sometimes be obtained, if specially ordered, at the City of Mexico hotels, although one would hardly recognize it as such unless he were told. It is perfectly white, hard and cheesy and always unsalted. On learning the Mexican method of churning we did not wonder at the quality, nor at the scarcity of the product. The milk, more often from the goat than the cow, after souring, is boiled. It is then placed in a pig-skin and fastened to the back of a burro and this unfortunate animal-churn is driven about until the butter comes. After very slight working it is made into rolls, wrapped in corn-husks, and sent to market. The Mexican waiter has a very pretty way of serving his butter: he presses it into little shell-shaped pieces, arranges them about the edge of a dish containing dainty red radishes, and then tenderly places the group in the centre of the table, evidently intended more for ornament than use.

The *tortillas* are a strictly national kind of bread, and every-where abound. Indeed, the women of the lower orders, young and old, seem to spend the greater portion of their lives in making these wafers. They are a sort of thin cake about the thickness, consistency and color of ordinary wrapping paper, made of Indian corn that has been soaked in lime-water, then ground by hand between two stones, patted into little cakes and finally baked. Nothing more absolutely tasteless can well be imagined; however, if they were salted, but they never are, and served hot, which is out of the question, and could be eaten with good butter, which is impossible, they might be passable eating, especially to one fond of the corn-dodgers of our southern states. They are believed to have some nutritious properties, and are the main diet of the peon, who uses them for food, plate, and spoon, placing on one tortilla his mess of *frijoles*, or native black beans, rank and greasy with rancid lard and red hot with chile, while with another tortilla he dips up his scanty portion, and then——eats his dishes. What a labor-saving custom for woman!

If one wishes any deviation from the regular bill-of-fare, or wants anything served in a manner different from the usual custom, it is a serious matter not to be able to speak the language of the country, for none other is understood by the *mozos*. One day a party of gentlemen, who had just arrived, wished their coffee hotter than the waiter

had brought it. They tried by the aid of gestures to make the matter plain, but in vain. Finally, after repeated efforts, the happy remembrance came to one of them that *caliente* means *hot*, this much Spanish having been learned from the name of the city; and with a gusto he announced to the amusement of all in the room that they wanted their "*café inferno caliente*." The mozo understood at last, and hastened off amidst the laughter of the company, returning in due time with the coffee, pot and all, so hot that the gentleman soon found to his sorrow that his fingers were "*inferno caliente*," and another laugh rang through the room, to the delight of the mozo especially.

The town we found to be very interesting and quaint. The houses are generally one story adobe, built in the usual hollow square, and often frescoed, or stuccoed in bright colors, inside and out, only the more pretentious buildings being of stone. All windows opening on the street are barred by iron gratings, this being their only means of protecting them without shutting out the light, until the recent innovation of glass. Even now many of the poorer houses have no such things as glass windows. The plaza is a delightful spot, shaded with tropical trees, musical with tinkling fountains, and bright, even in December, with roses and geraniums, which, in this land of perpetual spring, are never seared by the blighting breath of frost. Banks of delicious violets reflect the perfect azure

of the cloudless sky, and fill the air with a divine fragrance. Numerous cries in tones varying from the deep bass of the organ to the high treble of the flute, cries of "*aloudas, dulce aloudas*," or, as the peons call it, "*a-lou-s*," yelling it out at the tops of their voices after the fashion of the American newsboy, greet all comers. This call is intended to suggest an iced cream, offered for sale about the plaza. It is made in small tin boxes and frozen with ice made by pouring water into troughs cut in the great, fleshy leaves of the maguey. This huge plant contains a large amount of volatile oil, which evaporates so rapidly that, during the cool nights, it will congeal small quantities of water into strips of solid ice. Thus, surrounded by a scene almost tropical, we are refreshed with iced creams frozen by one of the native plants ripened under the fiery rays of the almost tropical sun.

In the centre of the plaza stands a lately renewed monument bearing the date of the founding of the town, 1548. This mark of antiquity does not surprise one, for the place is as lifeless as it is old, and business has surely long been dead, and only waiting for a decent burial. Even the coming of the railroads has failed to renew life in the old body of the town. The only evidence of vitality on a week-day is the *mercado de frutos*, where men and women, shrivelled and looking aged enough to have been among the first settlers, have great quantities of fruit for sale, all remarkably

cheap, delicious oranges being only one *centavo* a piece. This market we visit every day to buy fruit and practice our newly acquired and meager Spanish. On Sunday the *plaza del mercado*, or large market, is an interesting place, as the Mexicans and Indians for miles about bring here their fruits, vegetables and all kinds of wares. Each seller squats himself on the ground by the side of his little pile of stock in trade, crying for buyers, in corrupted Mexican Spanish. Vegetables and fruits of all kinds, as well as household furniture and wearing apparel, and a great variety of unglazed and rudely decorated pottery, all shapes and sizes, from minute kitchen utensils to great canteens large enough to hold water sufficient to carry one across the desert to Guaymas, are here offered for sale. These canteens are of a porous ware, permitting constant evaporation, and serve to keep the water cool.

There are many beautiful churches here to visit, one facing the plaza across from the hotel, having nine bells in its tower, one of which contains, as our guide informs us, thirty-six thousand dollars worth of silver. Whenever it sounds, the poor peons, with heavy burdens on their backs, stop and take off their hats and pray in superstitious awe, and then stagger on under their loads. It rings the morning matins and the evening vespers, ever thrilling us with its rich and far-rolling resonance.

“ I've heard bells chiming
Full many a clime in,
Tolling sublime in
Cathedral shrine ;
While at a glib rate
Brass tongues would vibrate ;
But all their music
Spake naught like thine.”

Also overlooking the plaza is a military post whose guard frequently changes with a great clatter of arms to the musical call of the bugle, which is sounded outside of the guard-door, and again in the court, growing softer and softer, and gradually dying to an echo as though an army were marching away in the distance.

The serape factory is a place of industry giving work at very low wages to a considerable number of Mexicans. The wool is carded, colored and woven into the serape, a kind of shawl which is an essential part of the male attire, by means of a primitive hand-loom, manual labor being so cheap here that the introduction of machinery has proved to be far from remunerative. Ordinary laborers rarely receive more than twenty to fifty cents a day, and a large part of even this meager income is squandered on *pulque* and tobacco. Because they can live in their wretchedly poor way on almost nothing, it never occurs to them to lay up for the morrow, each day being literally sufficient unto itself. Whole families live, eat and sleep in one small room, where a bed of matting, a very

few earthen-ware utensils, the stone and roller for making tortillas, and an iron vessel for holding charcoal, make up the sum total of their furniture. Tortillas, chile, beans and lard make a hearty meal for them, the latter so rancid that often when a Mexican woman is carrying home in a paper the little supply for the day, one's olfactories are the first to remind him of her approach. Grease of any kind seems to answer their purpose, and since the introduction of railroads among them they have been known to beg or steal the waste from the car-wheels—that vile stuff whose odor has become familiar to all travelers as the “hot-box smell.” The peons squeeze out this filthy, black grease and use it to enrich their mess of beans. If a little coarse meat can be added occasionally they have a sumptuous meal. But when the prickly-pear, or *tuni's*, the fruit of the cactus, is ripe, it offers to them a feast merely for the gathering, when the necessity for work is so slight that laborers are hard to find in this season.

Their wardrobes are as poor as their diet. The women wear a cotton chemise with either a woolen or a calico skirt, the head and shoulders being wrapped in the rebosa, a long scarf of blue and white cotton cloth about the weight of gingham. The men wear trousers and shirts of cotton, and woolen serapes, with feet either bare or protected with cheap sandals. To this costume they add the sombrero with a brim as wide as their limited

means will allow, for the peon who can possess himself, no matter how, of a complete, wide-brimmed sombrero, either of straw or felt, with a few tinsel ornaments, is a king among his fellows. Generally the peon has little more than a cast-off remnant of a hat with which however he is graciously polite as if it were laden with silver braid and buttons and he a *caballero*, lifting it to his fellow-laborer with all the grace of an English dude. Frequently these poor sons of Spanish courtesy may be seen lifting their sombreros to one another, and standing bare-headed in the fierce sunshine while in conversation before the fountain to which they have come for water. Even the roughest banditti of Mexico are said to doff their sombreros and beg a thousand pardons when they relieve a traveler of his purse and other valuables.

The Mexican mode of greeting between friends is not only effusively polite, but exceedingly demonstrative. It consists of an embrace in which each man throws his arms about his fellow and pats him on the back with both hands. Many a traitorous knife approaches its victim under cover of this custom, gleams an instant, and then buries itself to the hilt in the vitals of the unsuspecting. Perhaps a game of cards has been the cause of the treacherous assault, or an unlucky serenade under the window of some fair *doncella*. This method of salutation seems to be a subject of exceeding interest to one of the gentlemen of our party, who

is taking elaborate notes and sketches from life of this attractive fashion, and will endeavor, probably, on his return to the States, to get up a class in some boarding-school, with himself as head teacher.

Our drives and walks about the town invariably show us some new phase of human life and character, and are very enjoyable. Even the meanest streets are remarkably clean, for there is a law here and in many Mexican cities, as in Prague of old, requiring every householder to clean his door-way and his own portion of the street every morning before eight o'clock, and this law is strictly enforced.

The baths, of course, are a frequent place of resort, the better ones being out of town about half a mile at the end of the *alameda*, a broad drive shaded by large cotton-wood trees. Along its side runs an acequia where all the washer-women of the town gather to do their washing. These poor creatures kneel or sit on the bank and rub their clothes in the stream, pounding them between two flat stones until they are pronounced clean, the *amola*, or root of the yucca, being used for soap. After looking at this primitive method of washing one can but wonder on seeing his laundry return clean and untorn. The sight of women washing their garments in the way-side stream is exceedingly novel, but fades into nothingness when the scenes at the baths meet our astonished eyes.

The waters from the many hot-springs above drain into a hollow and form a large pond whose greatest depth is from six to eight feet. Here the poor congregate, because the luxuries of the private bath-houses are beyond their reach. On the banks they disrobe, often washing out their few articles of clothing and hanging them up to dry, and then *en cueros*, and with utter *abandon*, men, women and children plunge together into the water. Passing by this inhuman scene as quickly as possible the bath-houses are soon reached. These consist of rows of cell-like rooms with stone floors and steps leading down into the bath or spring bubbling up from the gravelly bottom. The arrangements, however, are exceedingly crude, and there are no attendants furnished. The water is walled in and permitted to rise about four feet before being drained off, the springs varying in temperature from ninety to about one hundred and twenty degrees; and one may select the temperature of his bath to suit his taste. The mineral and caloric properties of these waters are believed by the natives to have curative powers, especially in chronic rheumatism and in many forms of cutaneous disease, and consequently they are much sought by the afflicted. They are also visited by the well-to-do people of the town who are in no need of their medicinal virtues. On leaving this refreshing spot we find the scene without rather grown worse than better. Some families, having finished bathing and

partially clothed, are enjoying a *siesta* on the bank. Many mothers are tenderly examining their children's heads for——things too numerous to mention:

“My sooth! right bauld ye set your nose out,
As plump and gray as ony grozet;
O for some rank, mercurial rozet,
Or fell, red smeddom!
I'd gie you sic a hearty dose o't,
Wad dress your droddom!”

We considered ourselves lucky in having no need of “mercurial rozet,” nor “fell, red smeddom,” while in this over-fertile country; but without quantities of flea-powder, life would have been a burden, for the sands are every-where alive with *pulgas*, each peck of sand apparently containing a bushel of fleas. It was impossible to take even a short stroll without gathering up numbers of these unwelcome visitors, until by the constant use of *pulvo insectos* we were able to make ourselves and our apartments tolerably uninhabitable to these specimens of lightning activity.

A few days before leaving Aguas Calientes one of our party was fortunate enough to meet with some Mexican senators, who were also visiting the baths, and with whom he became acquainted through his government position. These gentlemen were very courteous, and expressed themselves as regretting exceedingly that they were not traveling our way. Mexican etiquette seems to

require this bit of fiction, or flattery, and it means no more than the French *bon voyage*, or our American "Good-bye! Have a good time; take care of yourself and come home safe!" But with the usual overflowing hospitality of the country they offered to place houses, servants and stables at our entire command while in the City of Mexico. This liberality, except some letters of introduction and an invitation to a drive on the *paseo* behind the senator's courtly and spirited span, was politely declined; but it was a pleasant incident in our stay, and added another to our many regrets in bidding adieu to this quaint old place.

CHAPTER VI.

BY DILIGENCE TO SAN LUIS POTOSI.

A SHORT run brings us to the little city of Lagos, so old that the lakes which once lay round about, and from which it takes its name, have all disappeared. A river, furnishing the motive power for a large cotton-factory and also the needful supply of water for the inhabitants, flows through the town which indolently pushes its way upward to the surrounding hills. The plazas are beautiful with orange, fig, and other semi-tropical trees. The Cathedral is a magnificent structure of pink sandstone, with lofty towers and heavily carved front, showing no signs of its full century of years. The place is picturesque and has a delightful climate, it being nearly uniform the year round.

One of its industries, the diligence lines, running from Lagos westward to Guadalajara, and eastward to San Luis Potosi, has been recently pushed aside by steam-power and Yankee enterprise. They have rapidly given way before the railroads, and will soon be as little necessary as in our own rail-webbed land. The fast line to San

Luis had not yet been discontinued when we first visited this part of the country, although the almost completed railroad from Mexico thither practically announced that its days were numbered. But it went out with a dash, making its trip of one hundred and seventeen miles in sixteen hours. Wishing to examine into its former sphere of usefulness, as well as to realize the experience of our ancestors in the days when the irrepressible Pickwickians staged it over England, we determined upon taking the diligence to San Luis Potosi on almost the last run of its life. It was a wild drive behind nine vigorous mules with wonderful powers of endurance, kept to the utmost speed by two whippers who constantly urged them by effectively aimed stones, and with long lashes stingingly curling about their ears. In and out of every town, and past the little hacienda villages, it was always a mad dash, flinging clouds of dust in all directions, choking and blinding us, and spreading a gray pall over the already dust-laden landscape.

There were but two passengers in the diligence besides our party, one a coffee-raiser from southern Mexico, a fair type of his class both in physique and in dress. He was short and compactly built, with black hair and mustache, complexion somewhat swarthy, with high cheek-bones and with dark, flashing eyes. His costume consisted of velvet trousers ornamented with many rows of

silver buttons up the sides which were left open a few inches above the ankles, showing full inner drawers of a contrasting color. The short velvet jacket was buttoned and richly braided with silver, and the immense gray-white felt sombrero was also heavily decorated with cords and tassels to match. Two burnished revolvers and a sheathed knife with jeweled handle ornamented his belt, and a gay-colored serape was thrown carelessly across his shoulders. Yet, with all, he was a good fellow, only following the customs of his country, and none the more dangerous because, as the Irishman would say, he carried his concealed weapons exposed to view. The other passenger was a Spaniard just visiting this country for the first time. Besides his own musical tongue he spoke French fluently, and thereby gave us interesting information along the way as his Mexican companion gave it to him, and he also gave us his impressions of the New Spain as compared with the Old.

At the dinner-station, where we fetched up so suddenly that most of the passengers found themselves huddled together in the front end of the diligence, there was ample time given us to stretch our weary limbs, and to eat a hearty Mexican dinner, or as much of it as our American tastes desired. Then away we started again, with fresh mules galloping most of the way, up hill and down, over a road that, although generally fair, was sometimes as rough as clumps, and holes, and rocks, and

ridges could make it, until with a last spurt we rattled over the now dark streets of San Luis Potosi, tired but glad we had come. It has been said that the Mexicans consider any road good whose holes are not deep enough for graves and whose rocks can be clambered over without the aid of ladders. While this may be an exaggeration, it is true that many times on this diligence ride was the remark brought vividly to memory.

With the morrow, after having enjoyed a refreshing sleep, we came forth with renewed energies to find ourselves in the finest Mexican city we had yet seen. San Luis resembles the cities of southern Mexico in character and in general appearance. There is a richness of coloring that is not to be seen in the northern states. The streets are well paved and well laid out. The houses are generally two stories high. There are many fine churches, notable even in Mexico, and a stately Cathedral with two towers between which is a beautiful clock, a royal gift to the city from one of the kings of Spain. From one of these towers we obtain a bird's-eye view of the city and surroundings. Immediately below is the plaza, among whose embowering trees are seen bright flowers of many varieties, a fountain dancing and gleaming in the sun, about which are crowds of the common people coming and going, and over all a bronze statue of the patriot Hidalgo standing on a marble pedestal.

On all sides the town spreads out, with many church spires, and here and there a fine stone building rising above the flat roofs of the houses. Parks are scattered about, and the shaded alameda looks invitingly cool in the distance. So, indeed, we found it on another occasion as we wandered under its trees out to the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Broad, fertile plains lie beyond, surrounded by lofty mountains. The picturesque balconies with their gay awnings must be tempting places for the Mexican style of courtship, which consists of serenades and notes passed through the barred windows, happily replied to if a rose is thrown down by the fair hand of the adored señorita, perhaps the sweeter for a dainty kiss from the red, smiling lips—a far-away sort of loving hardly to be appreciated in our freer country. Perhaps a bold Romeo may sometimes climb up to his lady's window for a warmer kiss than the one wafted to him by a rose, or there may be stolen meetings in a dusky chapel where the pious maiden has gone to pray to the Madonna for her brave caballero and been answered by his immediate presence. Perchance the rendezvous is the moonlit plaza where, under cover of the music, the laughter and the babbling tongues, they wander through a shaded arbor and repeat their whispered vows. This is the poetry of courtship and the sweeter for being stolen. Its practical side consists in daily pacing to and fro

under the window of the fair inamorata, after a fashion known in Mexican parlance by a term signifying, in our prosy language, "playing the bear." Calls at the house must be made also, and if his suit has prospered he is permitted to see the object of his affections, and perhaps touch her hand in greeting, but only in the presence of father, mother and the entire family, for a Mexican is supposed never to see his sweetheart alone until after the marriage ceremony has been duly solemnized by both Church and State. That a union from such an acquaintance, giving neither party an opportunity to learn the inner life of the other, should result unhappily is not surprising.

After marriage the barriers are removed and the señora may now walk, ride, smoke cigarettes with her friends, and almost flirt as she pleases, being no longer under the ever-present eye of a chaperon, although more or less carefully guarded by the eye of a jealous husband, ready enough with the stiletto if his jealousy is aroused. These are customs handed down from the chivalric days when it was the first duty of man to worship woman, and the first aim of woman to marry, the only alternative being the convent.

One morning we met a wedding party, evidently in low life as the entire company were on foot. In front came a gorgeously robed priest, attended by his acolytes carrying a banner and cross and swinging a smoking censer. Next came the bride

and groom, the former in white, her whole face and form enveloped in the ample folds of a coarse bridal veil. The groom jauntily held her hand, his dress being a marvel in its gay colors. Following them were the bride's father and mother, as we supposed, proudly conscious of the goodly spectacle, further enhanced by a little procession of friends of both parties, all stepping to the merry strains of a native wedding-march.

Among the very poorest, however, marriages are dispensed with as luxuries altogether too expensive. Their meager wages are insufficient to allow them to pay a priest to perform the ceremony, and the couple join hands without his saintly blessing. Noticeable among them is a strange fondness for their families, coupled with a lamentable promiscuousness of living, hardly to be wondered at when we consider the wretched and crowded condition of their hovels and the almost animal degradation of their lives.

The mode of burial among the lower orders of Mexicans is truly horrifying. They are seldom able to buy even the very cheapest of coffins, and are fortunate, indeed, if they can rent one, in which case their dead is carried in it to the grave and then removed and laid in its last resting-place, wrapped only in a winding-sheet. Often their poverty is so great that not even the rented coffin is possible, and the corpse is covered and tied to a chair and thus borne through the streets by a

little knot of mourners carrying a crucifix and a few lighted candles for which their last centavo has been expended.

At one time San Luis was famous for its silver mines. These, however, have long been abandoned, and are now caved in. The population and wealth of the city have decreased; but its present importance as a railroad centre promises to bring a return of its former prosperity.

When the exiled Santa Anna was recalled to the management of affairs at the opening of the war between Mexico and the United States, in 1846, it was here that he gathered his forces, marching northward to Buena Vista, where our army under General Taylor was encountered, and a bloody battle fought. Each side claimed the victory, but the practical result was in favor of the American forces, who held the field while Santa Anna was compelled to return to San Luis with the remnant of his army. It was during this war that the Texans made their name such a terror by their reckless bravery, lawlessness and heartless cruelty. But when is war not cruel? There is a sentiment among the Mexicans to-day that it would be an easy matter to conquer the United States if only the Texans were left out.

San Luis Potosi is still a considerable military post. The barracks band plays in the plaza several evenings of the week, and the officers stationed here are brilliant additions to society and efficient promoters of the winter gayeties.

On the return trip our only fellow-passenger was a Texan who had come into the country on cattle business, and who talked of cattle and cattle-raising the whole way, numbering even our party by the head. The little white hacienda villages which, ghost-like, appeared and disappeared as we rattled on, were interesting to him only as they contained well-stocked corrals. The cactus-covered land, through which we passed much of the way, was too poor pasturage even to engage his attention; and the scarcity of water was a matter of consequence to him only as it affected the business of the *ranchero*. He was a rough, hearty, swaggering fellow, a dangerous foe at the gaming-table, no doubt, when heated with liquor, but safe enough in a country where pulque is the only obtainable intoxicating drink to tempt his untutored taste.

After a few days of much-needed rest we again journeyed on, passing through Leon, one of the principal manufacturing cities of the Republic. Its population is estimated at more than a hundred thousand, mostly engaged in weaving cotton or woolen fabrics, in manufacturing leather goods, and in making boots, shoes, hats and rude cutlery. From the train only the church spires and the smoke of the mills can be seen, for, as is the rule over all Mexico, the station is a mile or more from the town.

CHAPTER VII.

MINING IN MEXICO.

CAN it be that we are the same commonplace travelers who, only a short time ago were walking briskly through the busy streets of the wide-awake, thriving American towns of the nineteenth century, sight-seeing and studying humanity? Surely the Glass of Time has run its sands swiftly backward, and, while the little mules of our tramway are galloping from Marfil around short curves and up steep hill-sides to the billowy notes of the driver's horn, we have returned to the sixteenth century and are entering one of the walled cities of the past.

The road we have come is alive with troops of burros and laborers. Mines dot the mountain sides, and great, walled-in beneficiary works frown upon us, until at length we swing into the bewitching city of Guanajuato, one of the greatest mining centres of Mexico. This interesting city is made up of three towns builded in narrow gorges among the hills. The streets are steep, narrow and winding; and the houses climb up the rugged hill-sides, one above the other, as a vine

clings to the mouldering wall it helps to support. There is an increased activity among the people, but it is after the Mexican fashion, indolent and lifeless. Perhaps it is this paradoxical state, this apparent ease under burdens, together with their entire surface indifference to the affairs of life that makes us judge of the Mexicans as wanting in industry. Certain it is that we see hundreds of them bending their backs and staggering under loads which no American could be hired to carry. While our workmen are clamoring for shorter hours and more pay, these poor peons are working faithfully, and in the most slavish manner, twelve and even fourteen hours of the twenty-four for a mere pittance, ranging from twenty-five to seventy cents a day.

There are many beautiful residences here, and an infinite and novel variety of scenery in the town itself, as well as among the closely encircling mountains. The little plaza is rich in verdure, and the market-place, reflecting the gay colors in every form of crude combination, is filled with a heterogeneous mixture of all the commodities of the country. There is an old church here that seems to embody in its stately arches, soft tints and elegant carvings, the spirit of the old Spanish dominion.

The *Castillo del Grenaditas* occupies a prominent point in the heart of the city. It is an immense, square, stone building, two stories high,

with walls of enormous thickness. It was originally intended as a storage-place for grain, but it has served a variety of purposes since its construction. When Hidalgo raised his standard for freedom in the country, and marched to Guanajuato, the whole native-born population flocked to his cause, untrained and almost without arms, but brave, confident and determined. The Spaniards, although scarcely numbering two thousand, entrenched themselves in this castle, and by their superior position and the possession of fire-arms made a successful defense, until some Indians, placing flat stones on their backs as shields against the deadly hail of bullets which the Spaniards constantly showered upon them, crawled to the fortification and fired the gates. The Spaniards were completely routed, and but very few escaped. After Hidalgo was in his turn defeated, and with his three companions shot at Chihuahua, their heads were sent here and hung from the four corners of this building, where they remained until, in 1823, the Spanish yoke was at last broken, when the heads were removed and given illustrious burial. The castle is now used as a state-prison, where we saw the inmates, some six hundred, men and boys, and a few women, at work at different trades, weaving serapes and blankets, and making boots, shoes, hats, candles, and many other Mexican necessities.

The principal places of interest are the mines,

and great reduction works, of which there are fifty in Guanajuato alone. Mining has been one of the chief industries of this country ever since the Spaniards gained possession of it, and even before their invasion the Aztecs had developed and worked successfully mines of silver and gold, as well as of copper and tin; and there are fabulous accounts given of the wealth of the ancient capital of the Montezumas. It was this treasure that excited the cupidity of the Spaniards and increased their zeal in the enterprise of conquering the vast territory of Mexico. "They suffered from a chronic disease of the heart," said Cortes, "for which gold was the efficient and only remedy," and even that great General himself showed symptoms of the same malady.

"Gold! Gold! Gold! Gold!
Bright and yellow, hard and cold,
Molten, graven, hammered and rolled;
Heavy to get, and light to hold,
Hoarded, bartered, bought and sold,
Stolen, borrowed, squandered, doled,
Spurned by the young, but hugged by the old
To the very verge of the church-yard mold,
Price of many a crime untold."

The mountains of Mexico, from the State of Chihuahua on the north to Oaxaca on the south, abound in almost inexhaustible deposits of gold and silver, lead, iron and copper; while in other localities are found mercury, tin, platinum, coal,

and, indeed, every mineral known to science. It is said of Mexico that the expression "silver hills" has more than a figurative meaning, and that the "entire backbone of the Republic is of silver, with ribs of gold extending deep into the bowels of the earth."

The Aztecs possessed more gold than silver, because it was found in the natural state and was more easily mined; but the principal mineral wealth at present comes from the silver mines, richest in the districts of Guanajuato, Zacatecas, Pachuca, Catorce and Sombrete. The Veta Madre of Guanajuato and the Veta Grande of Zacatecas are, next to the world-famed Comstock lode of Nevada, the most remarkable veins on the continent.

Millions of dollars worth of silver are exported every year to Europe, and the entire estimated yield of the precious metals in Mexico runs into figures so inconceivably great that the numbered sands of the sea-shore would be as easy to realize. Yet it is the history of this country, as of others, that, so many are the failures and so great the expenses of developing even the most successful mines, more money has been sunk in the country than has ever been taken out of it.

The mining laws of the country are simple and efficient. Commercial Boards, consisting of three members, are elected by the mine-owners in every district where mines exist. To them all matters

of locating mines, and of adjusting disputed claims, or trouble with land-owners, are referred. When a lode is struck one person is privileged to take up two claims, six hundred feet long by three hundred wide, and two persons twice that amount; but no one company can take up more than four contiguous claims on any one vein. The filing of a claim guarantees the right of possession if the conditions are duly fulfilled, which require that a shaft be sunk within the first four months and that work be carried on thereafter four months continuously out of each year. In case of failure to follow the requirements of the law the property is denounced, reverts to the state, and is disposed of at public sale.

Claims may be taken up on any property where minerals are discovered, no matter to whom the land may belong, as titles to real estate in Mexico only recognize the geographical surface. The precious metals buried beneath are considered in the eyes of the law as treasure-trove belonging to the fortunate discoverer; and he has the right to possess himself of any lands positively necessary to secure his prize. If, however, more land is needed than is actually required for the sinking of shafts and for the erection of necessary mining-works the owner must be reimbursed at a price to be decided by arbitration. The amount paid for the right to use the surface in the vicinity of the shaft gives no title to the land, which reverts to the owner when the mine is abandoned.

To encourage the introduction of foreign capital aliens are allowed the same privileges as citizens. But in almost every instance, when foreign companies have entered upon mining enterprises here, the necessary knowledge of the habits and customs of the country, and of the best means of conducting the work, has only been acquired after bitter and expensive experience. Some of the great mines of the Veta Madre, running along the mountains above Guanajuato, are examples of this fact.

More than three centuries ago this vein was discovered, and for a long period of years streams of silver, almost beyond conception, flowed from its rich mines. Humboldt estimated that in a single century, ending in the year 1800, this vein had produced silver to the value of two hundred and eighty millions of dollars. Since the above date an English company obtained possession of one of the greatest of these mines, and began operations under a board of directors living in London. The superintendents whom they sent out understood neither the science nor the economy of Mexican mining, and by extravagant expenditures, mismanagement, and the introduction of heavy machinery almost the entire capital, some five millions of pounds sterling, was sunk before the company learned wisdom enough to place their works in the hands of efficient managers who were conversant with the ways of the country. It took, indeed, an

aggregate loss of over fifty millions of dollars to cure the English of an attack of the Mexican mining fever.

In Pachuca there is a colony of Cornish miners who came to Mexico sixty or seventy years ago. Some few of them acquired wealth and returned to Old England to enjoy the fruits of their labors in peace and plenty, but in general the colony had made but a scanty living, until a few years since they made a lucky hit in the Santa Gertrudis. This mine had passed through many hands but long ago had been abandoned and denounced, when it was taken up finally by one of the Cornish miners who formed a little company of his fellows and re-opened it. Soon striking a paying vein he sold his controlling interest for fifteen thousand dollars, while now a single share, or one-twenty-fifth, is valued at nearly a hundred thousand. The mine has produced upwards of four millions of dollars, and, besides declaring enormous dividends that have raised from penury to wealth all those who held to their stock, it has vastly deepened its shafts, erected massive buildings, and largely increased its working capital by the addition of all the machinery and apparatus necessary for running the mine to advantage.

The Rosario mine of the same district is another example of the fickleness of fortune, of the utter uncertainty attending all mining enterprises, and of the wonderful fascination of such games of

chance. Previous to its control by the present management this mine had passed through the hands of two other companies as a failure, the second abandoning it within a few feet only of the marvelous vein from which silver ore to the value of a hundred millions of dollars has been obtained.

A few years since, as the story runs, all Mexico was startled at the news that an ancient mine, also in this section, more than a century ago abandoned, had been re-opened with incredible success. Before abandonment it had been the property of the Condé de Regla, a Mexican Croesus, who had worked in it hundreds of slaves in chain-gangs, and never allowing them to see the light. At length, in the depths of despair, these pitiable wretches and wrecks of humanity fired the frameworks and perished in the flames. After this horrible catastrophe no miner could be induced to resume the work, and this charnel-cave, with all its terrors, soon filled with water. Whether or not this story gives the true solution of the cause for abandoning this mine, certain it is that the peons of to-day, who are working the same vein, have dug up rust-eaten tools and human skeletons, to say nothing of countless stores of silver.

The Valenciana, Nopal and Rayas mines are among the largest in the vicinity of Guanajuato. The gentlemen of our party visited the latter and found the trip to be a tremendous undertaking, but one of exceeding interest. There are three shafts,

the deepest of which extends down into the earth nearly two thousand feet. It is entered by means of massive steps cut in the solid rock, and one's courage, as well as strength, is hard-strained on that long descent to the vein. Even the heavy timbering of the tunnels and chambers is insufficient security against the dreadful feeling of oppression and fear of being buried alive, or suddenly left in darkness, deserted by the unknown guide, and lost in the windings of these subterranean labyrinths and corridors.

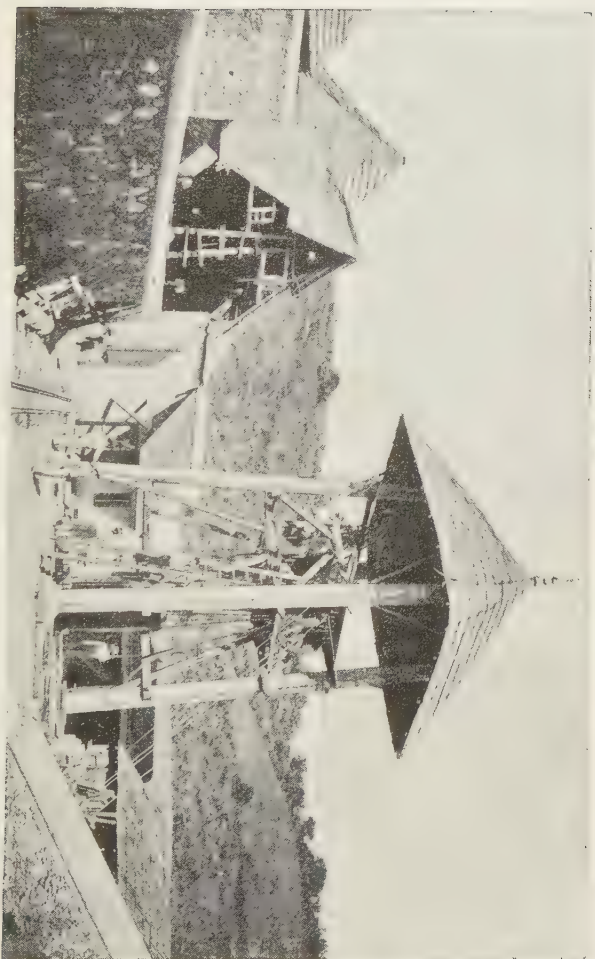
The lighting of the cavern is by means of flickering candles placed here and there on the sidings and props, or carried about in clay sockets fastened to the caps of the peons at their diggings. Seeing them in their dismal chambers, moving about with their loads and shifting lights, these peons appear like so many satanic spectres toiling for their master in his under-ground kingdom. There are something like two thousand of these laborers employed in this one mine. All of the work is done by man or beast, as there are very few steam-pumps or hoisting machines used in Mexico. The water is raised from the pits by means of great skins made into bags and fastened to ropes, and then hauled to the surface.

The ore is loosened with iron picks tipped with steel, then wheeled or carried to the main *adit*, or shaft, by hand, the peons often taking on their backs, from distant parts of the mine, pieces of

rock weighing two hundred pounds. At the shaft it is heaped in immense baskets and hauled up with a sort of windlass run by mule-power. Long before a tourist visiting this mine has climbed again the hundreds of slippery steps and rope-ladders to the outer world he wishes he could be hauled up in the same way, despite its many dangers.

The mine-mouths and reduction works are all enclosed by high, stone walls, as if prepared to withstand a siege; and, indeed, in the earlier days, when revolution ran riot in the land, and bands of banditti infested the mountain passes, and robbery and murder were the order of the day, such means of defense, well supported by an armed force, was a necessary precaution. All the work is performed within closed gates, and the miners are thoroughly searched before being allowed to pass through them at the close of the day's labor. These poor fellows, in an almost pardonable dishonesty, resort to every conceivable means of cheating their employers and eluding detection, often concealing rich nuggets of ore between their toes, under their arms, in their mouths, in their hair, and in every possible hiding-place about their bodies, their scanty clothing being of little use to them for purposes of concealment.

Our party found the reduction works more interesting and more to their taste than the gloomy depths of the mines. These are all run by horse-



A MINING SHAFT AT GUANAJUATO.

or mule-power, except the Pardo, which is one of the few mills operated by steam in Mexico. The method of reducing the ores is by the patio, or cold amalgamation process, fortunately invented by a Mexican miner in the latter half of the sixteenth century. The owners of Mexican mines, who have reaped enormous fortunes as the direct results of this process, could well afford to honor the memory of the inventor, Bartolomeo Madina, by erecting to his name a monument of molten gold and silver; but such a tribute would be out of harmony with the ways of the world. Before the introduction of the patio process the Spaniards had been obliged to abandon many mines, which were yielding abundantly, for want of fuel to run their smelting furnaces.

The ore is brought in from the neighboring mines in sacks or baskets, slung panier-fashion across the backs of burros. It is then dumped into the mill, a bowl-shaped excavation, where it is crushed by a heavy stone wheel hooped with a thick wrought-iron band made to revolve on a horizontal axis, worked by mules. In the centre is an iron screen with coarse meshes, and as the ore is crushed it is constantly shoveled by hand upon the sieve, which allows the smaller pieces to drop through into a trough below. From here it is taken to the grinding-mill and pulverized between heavy blocks of basalt rock that are whirled about in a basin half-filled with water; these mill-stones

are also worked by mules, unless water is available. It takes about thirty hours to reduce the ore to a pulp, and it is then carried in heavy buckets to a paved court, or patio, from which the process takes its name. Here great masses of silver mud-pies are formed, and copperas, quicksilver and salt are scattered over them and then mixed, kneaded and trodden in by droves of mules driven round and round by almost naked peons. They stand in the thick, amalgamated mud and keep their mules tramping in ever-varying directions to ensure the perfect admixture of the chemicals with every particle of the ore. The mules, as well as the peons, are worked in relays, the silver mud being carefully washed from them when they leave the pits. It takes about a month of constant tramping in this way to thoroughly mix the materials. The entire work is carried on unceasingly day and night.

When thoroughly amalgamated the precious mass is taken to deep cisterns where it is well washed and churned, the silver particles gradually gravitating to the bottom, and after a few days the worthless mass of lighter weight is floated off. This silver amalgam is then placed in a kind of under-ground oven, covered with a heavy iron cap, about which hot fires are kindled and kept burning for several days in order to remove the mercury, by a sort of distillation process. The mass of pure silver now remaining is ready for the mint.

Although extremely slow and wasteful, the patio method is the one best adapted to the country on account of the character of the ore, the cheapness of labor, and the correspondingly high price of fuel. It costs on an average about twenty-five dollars a ton to mine by this process; therefore a vein from which ore, yielding less than thirty dollars a ton of gold or silver, is obtained, is not worth working. The great number of peons employed by the many different mining-companies here receive their wages on Saturday nights, and great as the accumulated sum is, it is practically all expended before the following Monday, on pulque, gambling and other unprofitable dissipations.

Sunday is the great national holiday, and after mass has been duly attended, the day may be spent in whatever manner of enjoyment is most pleasing, or most suited to their tastes and possibilities. It is the big market-day, and the markets are open and thronged during the morning. In the afternoon music in the parks and a bull-fight in the arena are rival attractions; in the evening all places of amusement are well attended.

CHAPTER VIII.

VALENCIANA AND BOLAÑOS MINES.

AS none but an experienced miner can make the descent into the dangerous depths of the ancient and interesting mines of Bolaños, and that of the great Valenciana, the author of this work is indebted for the valuable facts and descriptions contained in this chapter to a personal friend, a practical assayer, who has given many years to the study of Mexican mines and mining. Therefore, in his company let us wander again between the great adobe walls of the Haciendas of Guanajuato.

Properly furnished with a pass in the form of a note from some one in authority, we apply for admission at the gate-way of Hacienda Rocha, the largest of them all. Once within the gates we are struck with the busy scenes on every hand. We see the ore being unsacked in the ore-house, according to the mine whence it comes, delivered by mules carrying about three hundred pounds each. The milling is custom-work, and the miller keeps a strict account of every lot, and makes a return of the silver by assay and contract. At Guanajuato the ores come down the mountain-sides from

a hundred mines and prospect-pits, and no more picturesque sight can be seen than the ore-burdened burro trains filing along some steep and paved trail, enveloped with dust and ringing with the discordant shouts of their barbarous drivers. At the receiving-house the piles of ore are carefully marked by means of bits of paper impaled on sticks stuck in the respective lots, and then it is taken directly to the chilli mills—running round and round with a slow, grinding motion, and which are propelled by mules and fed by hand. The ore is thus reduced to fine gravel and sand, and is then wheeled away to the arrastras and submitted to the patio process, a description of which is given in the preceding chapter.

As no books properly describe the miner at his work, let us go under-ground and see him as he is. A mile or two to the north-east of Guanajuato rise the great walls surrounding the main shaft and works of Valenciana, the greatest mine in Mexico, and where every phase of Mexican mining may be seen. Like some grim fortress the adobe walls frown down upon us from their buttressed height of over sixty feet. It is an impressive sight, and one cannot but realize a sense of the dignity of this huge establishment, even from without its walls. Such walls were not raised for purposes of concealment, or beauty, but for defense in times of Spanish invasion and revolution. The huge arched gate-way is opened to receive us; a train of mules

comes scurrying and crowding through as we enter. Our horses keep to the centre of the gate as if they had the right of way, and the train of mules going either side is crowded against the walls. The drivers shout, "Mula! mula!" There is a final rush, and we find ourselves entering the great enclosure of Valenciana in a cloud of dust and clattering over the pavements of the *portales*. We are met by the mayordomo of the mine, a handsome Spaniard, whose gorgeous sombrero has been replaced by one of straw, and who greets us cordially as we dismount. A little mozo at the head of each horse takes him at once in charge; and attracting no little attention we cross the enclosure, among the busy ore-breakers.

What a scene for the nineteenth century! Two hundred men, women and children are sitting upon the ground among the gray piles of ore, each with a basket beside him, and with a small hammer he cracks it into bits of the size of walnuts. Each piece is carefully inspected; doubtful lumps are spit upon, and the assorting goes on, the ore falling either into the basket on the right, or upon the pile on the left, becoming either first- or second-class ore according to its fate and the judgment of these skillful sorters—a most interesting scene, but how utterly primitive!

Having arrived at the great shaft in the centre of the enclosure our doubts as to the truth of the stories told of this vast pit are forever set at rest.

We walk out upon rude cross-beams and stand over the centre of the shaft. It is forty feet in diameter and twenty-two hundred feet deep. The water in the sump is disturbed by a pebble that we drop, and shines like a silver mirror far below. The sides of the shaft for one thousand feet are lined with cut-stone masonry, and the shaft itself is a great hexagonal prism. Thrust above-ground this stone-built monument would be the loftiest on earth, one of the seven wonders of the world. The under-ground workings are forty-two miles in extent. One thousand miners are employed, and although there are three cages and hoists in the huge shaft, the shift goes to work by descending the slippery stair-ways of the levels. It requires three hours for them to reach the lowest level, and three hours to return again, and they work six hours; thus the miners spend half of their working time in going and coming. Since it would require six or seven hours to lower such a force of men by means of the cages, this ridiculous method is necessary. It is a picturesque sight to see the long line of white-garmented miners entering a cleft in the mountain-side and disappearing from the light of day. Let us enter with them.

Our guide is named Hillario, and was so handsome and so gaily equipped as he rode along with us up the mountain that we scarcely recognize him in his miner's attire, with his clay-colored sombrero and his waist-cloth.

Used to novices the miners are prepared to witness our alarm as we enter the narrow tunnel, and reach the first descending stairs. Set with stone, long covered and filled with the mud from many feet, the stair-way is a treacherous inclined plane, where the footing is most uncertain and the shadows deceptive. A little bare-legged Indian is our torch-bearer, the torch being made of a yard or two of tightly bound cotton cloth soaked in grease and wound with string into a long roll. Down and still down we go, slipping, sliding, stumbling on, now right, now left, now through long, low drifts dripping and foul for want of air, now across some vaulted chamber where one almost expects to see the stars. Suddenly all stand on the edge of a black, forbidding pit from which projects the end of an *escalera*, a notched pole, not so common in Guanajuato as elsewhere in Mexico, the stone stair-way having replaced it in the larger mines.

Our guide goes first. Hillario is an old miner, now retired from business and playing the gentleman. The little Indian torch-bearer squats at the top of the pit and holds the torch for us. Those long accustomed to the greasy *escalera*, fairly smooth with tallow, are quickly down. Hillario smiles his approval on such as are able to quickly follow him, and is greatly amused at the discomforts and ineffectual efforts of those new to the mines. It is a serious question to a novice whether it is wise to enter a deep, dark hole, the size of his body,

on a greased pole which is fastened at neither end nor braced in the middle. Many a tourist thinks the upper levels are curious enough to engage his interest, and proposes to remain there until the return of the more venturesome; but there is no place to wait in Valenciana. Woe to the man who gets lost in this great labyrinth and attempts to move about! The tender-foot had better remain above-ground or follow wearily and tremblingly after his guide. We are to be gone three hours and return by a different way, and no one can stay behind.

It is a matter of amusement to a Mexican miner to see the average American attempt to sample a mine. He himself knows very well how to knock down the ore; and he would have you take a few little lumps of rich specimens and be content, instead of overburdening yourself with widely gathered pieces of indifferent values. It would be a fool's errand for the tourist to attempt to sample Valenciana.

No words can describe the uncanny pits and grewsome pools in the heart of the mountain, in the labyrinthian depths of this great mine. Here is a rope-ladder, wet and slippery, dangling into darkness from a projecting beam. Whoever thought of a rope-ladder in a mine, or whoever played Romeo with a little naked savage for a Juliet, and a tallow rag for a moon! Ugh! it is enough to make the stoutest heart quail to think of some of these awful

chasms and unholy pits down deep in the bowels of the earth—but we must journey on. The crown of the drift is loose, barricaded with staves which bend with their burden of rock, riffraff carelessly held from falling, here and there dropping a shower of dry dust, or dripping muddy-red water upon us. Gnarled, and twisted, and uneven, the passage winds and sinks, rises and turns. Now we crawl on hands and knees along a slimy tunnel; now bent double we squirm through a dusty man-hole into a wild, weird world of darkness and uncertainty.

At last we stand in a working-drift and hear the clinking of the many hammers on the steel drills. Faint lights glimmer through the stifling mist and smoke of recent blasts, and the air is oppressive, for the temperature is over ninety. Forth from the darkness shine out dimly the naked bodies of the miners as they labor on. Such human toil! Alas! was there ever more abject slavery than this? These men receive seventy-five cents, Mexican money, for a day's work; the boss miners, one dollar; women, fifty cents, and children, twenty-five cents. The women's work is above-ground, as none are allowed in the pits. From childhood to old age the miner works under-ground while the sun shines, although he is often irregular in his hours, and the system of tributers (men who work by the ton) relieves many, thus affording even the Mexican miner an occasional opportunity to enjoy his holiday and his bull-fight.

Finally we are at the bottom of Valenciana, after a terrible journey, and we sit down to rest. The great silence is restful to those accustomed to it, but fearful to the uninitiated. Above us are the intricate windings of the vast mine, dug by human hands through the slow-moving centuries. Whole races of people have lived and died since this pit was begun, and what have they gained? The records tell us eight hundred millions of dollars. Shall we believe this incredible tale? Why not? These mighty caverns were not dug for pleasure, and every inch was drilled by hand, no machinery of any kind being used. The water, which at last became too much to handle, was lifted in huge ox-skins sewed into balloon-shaped bags, and pulled slowly up, a ton at a time, from these great depths, by whims which were ever in motion, driven not by steam but by horses or mules.

At Zacatecas one mine has eight hundred mules; and with all of them they cannot deliver as much water as would a two-inch pump working half-time. From many mines the water is carried away in pig-skins in living form, left whole and borne upon the backs of men. Upon reaching the surface a string, which fastens the snout of the apparently fat pig, is pulled and the pig collapses, pouring the water through the snout into a ditch, over the head of the prostrate carrier. This is a strange sight indeed to an American, and suggests the following story told by our miner-friend:

“Once in a vast mine in western Chihuahua I was waiting in a drift for the mayordomo to return. He was to guide me to a certain winze which I desired to sample. Water-carriers passed and repassed us, splashing along the drift. One little peon of sixteen years had impressed me by the beauty of his face and the fine lines and firm muscles of his bare body shining in the candle-light under his dripping load. Suddenly there came a prolonged silence, and then I heard groans in the darkness and the splashing of feet. Soon along the drift came an old man bearing on his back a form wrapped in a blanket, and groaning piteously, blood streaming down upon the old man’s white head, as bent and tottering he passed along that infernal highway. I lived much in a few moments. I shall never forget the picture; but such things are common enough here. Our little water-carrier had climbed out of one of the winzes with his bag of water upon his back. Reaching the top of the ladder the treacherous pig slipped; the band around his forehead caught him under the chin, and down he fell forty feet upon the heads of the men below, with that great bag of water fastened about his neck. As I descended there to sample this part of the mine some of the ore was yet warm with his blood, and yet many of the miners near by worked on as if nothing unusual had happened. ‘Have they no feeling?’ I asked Ferdinando. ‘Si, signor,’ he answered, ‘but they get only seventy-five cents a

day, and cannot afford to stop work; they have children, signor, and may not have feelings like other men to stop their labor and their pay.' I sent some money to the little mangled peon that he might have attention, and I was gratified to learn that he was still alive when I left Yoquivo."

With this sad tale let us leave the mine and turn to ore-values—a wide subject, too wide, indeed, for more than a brief mention here. At Guanajuato the ores to-day average fifty dollars, Mexican, per ton. Bonanza-leads are sometimes struck, and yield vast sums in a short time. Cata, the second great mine at Guanajuato, with a twin-shaft to that of Valenciana, forty feet in diameter, has had some remarkable strikes, and is now in bonanza. We were shown a chamber some fifty feet long by sixty high, from which six hundred thousand dollars worth of silver had been taken. The vein was here forty feet wide. All these mines, by the way, occur along the great Veta Madre, which outcrops for five miles along the mountain ridges west of Guanajuato which lies like a city in a huge caldron, swarming with human life and foul beyond description, yet picturesque withal.

The richest ores in the world, great masses of native silver, are found in some of the famous mines of Mexico. Occasionally there may be seen nuggets weighing as much as twenty-five pounds, beautiful to look upon, bought by assay at the bank.

There is some gold in all the ores of Guanajuato; little or none in those of the Veta Grande at Zacatecas.

If you care to ride from Zacatecas over the great table-land to the westward you can visit the Bolaños mines in Jalisco, one of the famous veins in the Republic, and now worked by an American company. The history of Mexico is a history of mines. The knowledge of ores and minerals is universal from pauper to prince. The Indians are all miners in one way or another. In Jalisco are found the Witchola Indians coming almost wholly naked into Bolaños, each with a tale of some ancient mine long hidden and, of course, of untold richness.

Bolaños was once a thriving and really magnificent little village. Its buildings are even now, fallen and destroyed though they be, massive and ornate. The walls of the haciendas and the patios are impressive examples of fine masonry. The Bolaños vein is a typical example of a true fissure. Twenty-six shafts are sunk upon the vein, extending over a distance of a mile and a half. At the southern end the Baranco shaft reaches a depth of seven hundred feet, and is lined and faced with cut stone, for some two hundred feet from the top. Rumor credits the south end of Bolaños with great richness. Old men are still in the town who, with tears in their eyes, speak of the silver bars that went to Zacatecas in other days. Fairy tales of

the past are told on all sides, and the church records show that before 1850 these mines yielded of silver four hundred millions of dollars.

To visit the churches, the walls and stone courts, the patios and the aqueduct built of stone masonry three miles long and running one mile through a mountain, is to grow convinced by degrees that the money which produced all these must have come out of the Bolaños vein. Every man, woman and child in the district is, or has been, a miner. The old dumps are worked still, and still a small yield of silver goes over the mountains yearly.

To make a trip through the various mines of this immense vein were but to repeat the experiences of our journey through Valenciana. One goes along the slimy drifts and down the slippery escaleras with such feelings as Æneas must have experienced while wandering through the dark and forbidding passage-ways of the nether regions. Even to one accustomed to the dark and dangerous caverns dug into the earth by the hand of man the threatening roofs and greasy ladders of the Mexican mine must ever remain a terror. Experience, however, soon accustoms one to the use of the rope-ladder, and in fact makes him familiar with everything dangerous and horrible in the bowels of the earth. Man cannot surprise one very much where nature awes. There is something horrible in the huge caverns, and irregular

excavations, and slimy foot-paths which characterize the Mexican mine. At any moment one may plunge down some unsuspected pit, or dash head foremost against projecting rocks. With a tallow dip or a lighted rag taper you wander on and stumble down, the naked miners crouching in the drifts to let you pass, and to say "*Buenos días*" with all the grace of beings of the upper air.

The glimpse of the deep blue sky above the bare mountains is too wonderfully sweet for words as you emerge, muddy and wet, from these *infernos*. The Mexican mine is certainly frightful even to an experienced miner, long used to the uncanny deeps; and in describing it there is no possibility of exaggerating its horrors.

At Zacatecas we find another great population given up to mining. It is a mistake to suppose that the American miner is needed in Mexico. The Mexican knows his business well. He goes in the most irregular manner; but he gets the value of the vein, and leaves behind him only what he does not want. Laborious and patient is this race of men who live under-ground in Mexico. The introduction of American machinery has done very little here as yet. The patio is everywhere worked, and the mules go round and round in the pasty *tortas* until one wearies of the sight.

In the extreme western part of Chihuahua there are hundreds of abandoned mines which are slowly being reclaimed since the disappearance of the

hostile Indians. The veins are unusually wide, the vein-matter easily mined, but the ores are all more or less refractory. One cannot move a step across country without running upon some mine well worthy of description.

In addition to the wealth of the Land of the Montezumas in gold and silver, it has other vast deposits scarcely less valuable. Iron is found in immense quantities in the States of Sonora, Oaxaca and Michoacan; while in the State of Durango alone the famous *Cerro del Mercado* is said to contain iron enough to supply half of the foundries of the world for years. Tin is also plentiful in this section, and lead ores, often beaded with silver, as in Colorado, abound all through the mountainous portions of the country. Sonora is rich in lead, iron, antimony, salt and copper, the latter being also considerably mined in Oaxaca and Chihuahua. Mercury, as well as petroleum, occurs in several states, and Lower California produces the diamond, although not of a very valuable kind. Coal is found in various localities, and there is reason to believe that extensive fields remain as yet unexplored in the Republic, although none such are known to exist. Anthracite and bituminous in every variety, together with a sort of brown coal, or lignite, lie embedded here and there in greater or less deposits. At present there are no large coal mines within reach of the railroads, and fuel is imported at great expense. Were the coal-bear-

ing rocks carefully prospected by competent judges, and were capital judiciously and intelligently invested in opening up coal-fields, connecting them by narrow-gauge roads with the main lines, and were the fields extensively worked with the vim and vigor of American enterprise, probably fortunes equal to any realized from the silver or gold mines would follow the undertaking.

CHAPTER IX.

AGRICULTURE AND KINDRED INTERESTS.

RETURNING to Silao through a country flourishing only in hills and abnormal growths of cañti, where the fleshy variety, wholly insignificant in the North, here attains tree-like proportions, and where the organ-cactus, used very extensively for fences in Mexico, towers skyward, its upright, bristly stalks safely enclosing, against all marauders not possessed of stout wings, any field it surrounds, we come again into a fertile district only requiring proper irrigation to produce two fine crops of maize or wheat a year. The line which marks the northern limit of the sun's vertical rays has long ago been crossed, and we are well down in the tropical zone where the summer sun shines the year round. The high altitude, however, of the extensive table-lands, constituting most of the geographical surface of Mexico, so tempers the climate that it is more nearly like that of our southern states, without their extremes of heat and cold. The vegetation is semi-tropical. Oranges and figs prosper, flowers bloom in the open plazas the year round, great rose-bushes fill

the air with their delicate perfumes, oleanders spread their wide-reaching branches into great shade-trees, calla lilies decorate the Christmas altars in profusion, and luscious strawberries may be eaten any day in the year.

"We are now in the land of pomegranate and vine,
Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever shine;
Where the light wings of zephyr, oppressed with perfume,
Wax faint o'er the gardens of roses in bloom;
Where the tints of the earth and hues of the sky,
In color, though varied, in beauty may vie,
And the purple of ocean is deepest in dye."

The mornings and evenings are always cool, and the middays warm, even oppressively so in the sun, there being a much more marked difference between the sunny and shady sides of the street in this thin air than in our heavier atmosphere. The rain-fall is very slight here, and is limited to about three months in summer, except along the coasts. For this reason irrigation is an absolute necessity to agriculture, and the right to water in Mexico is of more importance than the title to land. The bucket-method of raising water from ditches, the manner of farming, and the different instruments in use, are exceedingly primitive. Against the adoption of modern implements the peon has a deep-rooted prejudice that can be eradicated only by slow degrees. In making the cuts along the railways, for example, these laborers prefer to carry the dirt in bags on their backs

or heads, and even when induced to use the wheelbarrow they persist in filling them with dirt and then carrying them in the same way, instead of wheeling them on the ground. The introduction of labor-saving machinery they look upon with distrust, and when a progressive *haciendado* of the northern states imported, but a short time ago, a thrashing-machine for use on his own extensive farm, he was surprised to find it utterly demolished the first week after its arrival. When air-brakes were first placed on the Mexican Central, causing a lessening of the train-force, they too met with the same fate. But under the present firm and somewhat progressive government, and under the civilizing effect of railroads, these prejudices are passing away, and Mexico is taking a step forward. All signs point to an improved condition of affairs in the near future.

Education is steadily, though slowly, advancing. Since the establishment of the Republic a system of free schools, somewhat resembling that of our own country, has been adopted, but as yet it has taken little hold upon the lower classes outside of the large cities. It is estimated that two-thirds of the population are unable to read or write at the present day. The principal cities, however, have their colleges for the rich, and a few industrial schools for the poor have been opened, and there are art and law academies and colleges of science and of medicine, and in the City of Mexico there

is a practical and thorough mining school. Progress is afoot, although halting and hampered.

The fields might be made to produce a hundred-fold more abundantly than at present if a system of canals and reservoirs were adopted, such as are used so extensively in India, or even such as the simpler methods of our western states. With some such system of irrigation an income nearly equal to that coming from the mines would accrue from the golden harvests of the soil. These arid lands have their advantages over the rain-watered countries, in that they may be irrigated at will. Their cereals are not seared one year by a continued drought, nor blighted another year by continued rains. On the Mexican haciendas water is turned into the fields before sowing, again when the seed is sprouting, and again as the heads of grain are beginning to form. In this manner the Egyptians have produced their crops for centuries, although along the Nile the yearly overflow of that mighty river abundantly enriches the fields before sowing-time.

Silao is a quiet little place with no special points of interest, except that it is thoroughly Mexican; but the country round about offers some inducements, in the way of fine views and characteristic bits of agricultural life, to those who have the time and energy to make excursions, here and there, on the little Mexican ponies one may sometimes find for hire here, if he is persistent enough. These are the only means of conveyance practical for



A CHARACTERISTIC MEXICAN SCENE.

travelers, as the vehicles are too cumbersome for comfort, especially on the roads about Silao. Side-saddles are out of the question, but the broad-pommel saddle of the Mexicans makes a fairly comfortable seat for a woman; and there is something exhilarating and novel in riding a shaggy Mexican pony on a Mexican saddle which has thongs and straps and trimmings enough flying to create the idea of motion even at a dead stand-still. Our ride was by dashes and walks as the road permitted, the greatest drawbacks to enjoyment being the almost impassable portions of the mountainous road we had chosen. The air, however, was delicious, and there was a spice of romance in following an old Mexican guide as he trailed us about this rugged country.

At last we alighted at a way-side chapel erected, as a Spanish inscription over the door informed us, "In gratitude to the Blessed Virgin of Guadalupe, who mercifully heard my cries and rescued me from the hands of murderous highwaymen in the year 1869." We could not learn whether the Virgin performed this kindly act in person, or whether her representative arrived in time to save the pocket-book as well as the life of her petitioner, who thus generously commemorates his gratitude. The little chapel, although desolate from its lonely situation, is agreeably built, and well furnished with pictures of the Stations of the Cross, and the altar gaudily decorated. On one side of the nave

is a large glass case within which, in wax, is a life-sized image of Christ after the crucifixion—the most shockingly horrible thing of the kind we had ever seen. The face is pale, ghastly and agonized, the hair matted with blood which stands in great clots on the forehead and about the wounds from the crown of thorns. The breast is bare and from the pierced side streams of red blood flow. In the feet and hands are also wounds frightfully torn and mangled. It is a very crude and awful handling of this sacred subject, and a fearful picture to impress so realistically upon the superstitious minds and hearts of these poor, benighted, suffering specimens of humanity, who need all the help and brightness that religion in its purity can give them.

We visited also a little group of adobe houses clustered about a corn-mill of the primitive Mexican fashion; and we entered one of them under pretense of wanting a drink of water. The señora greeted us graciously and wished us a "*buenos dias*," in spite of the fact that there was an almost naked baby in each arm, two or three clinging to her scanty skirt and as many more huddling about her feet, reminding us of a brood of chickens nestling under their mother's wings at the approach of apparent danger. This ragged group, with its dismal background, again bespeaking a condition of degradation and wretchedness beyond belief, furnished us with ample food for

reflection and discussion during the remainder of our ride.

On reaching the city we found it all astir, and rather unpleasantly so for us Americans, over the successful escape, from the clutches of the law, of a railroad conductor whose train, on a previous trip, very unluckily had run over and killed a Mexican *ranchero*. The incident is worth relating, as it illustrates with what ease and unconcern one Yankee can outwit and elude a whole *posse* of Mexican police. The conductor was in no way to blame for the disaster, as he was some distance away from the coach when the accident occurred. The unfortunate man had probably taken a glass too much of pulque, and had attempted to board an outgoing train after the warning bell had sounded, when he missed his hold and fell under the wheels. Considerable excitement had been worked up over the affair. The dead man's friends held that as the conductor had started the train he should be held accountable, and they issued a warrant for his arrest upon his return trip. The operator heard of the plan, however, and managed to wire his warning to the conductor, who, on arrival, removed the band from his hat and kept himself in the background until time for the train to leave. While the mounted police, revolvers in hand, stood ready to seize the conductor at the moment of his calling out the signal for starting, he slyly nodded to his engineer, and the train was off. As the fact began

to dawn on the minds of the police that they were fooled, they rode madly after the train, firing wildly; but their man had escaped, not soon again to enter their town.

As we reached the station we found the operator making preparations to go north also, as suspicion had fallen on him as the informer, and the air was thick with threats and curses. He was well prepared to meet the emergency, for a big six-shooter was in his unoccupied hand, and another lay upon his desk close by the fingers that were coolly thumbing the keys, asking for protection and a safe exit from the country. Life is not long a burden to one in this land after he has incurred the displeasure of the authorities.

CHAPTER X.

GUADALAJARA.

SWIFTLY we speed on the short journey from Silao to Irapuato, where we are to take the newly completed branch line to Guadalajara.

“The dark world lies still in a sort of sweet swoon,
Wide open to heaven; and the stars on the stream
Are trembling like eyes that are loved on the dream
Of a lover; and all things seem glad and at rest.”

Rudely is the stillness of the nightly scene broken by the long, piercing whistle for the station, and then with ringing of bell and shouting of strange tongues we enter the town, and are soon in the midst of the lights and in confusion. As we are waiting for baggage transfers to be made a group of natives surrounds us with baskets of luscious-looking strawberries, the more tempting for their unfamiliar, musical name. Of course we bought some, for at twenty-five cents a basket who can resist strawberries in January? Some Mexican *ranchero* in the vicinity, more enterprising than his fellows, cultivates this delightful fruit here, and such is the equability of the climate that the berries ripen the year round. Later we discovered

that our baskets were largely filled with cabbage leaves and green fruit, with only a handful of ripe berries on the top. After all, American enterprise is not alone in the art of making much out of little, especially when at another's expense. However, even a handful of strawberries, fresh from the vines, are something to enjoy in midwinter.

With the morning we were on our way to Guadalajara. The road leads along the fertile valley of the Lerma river, and touches at several considerable towns, the largest, La Piedad, having a population of about ten thousand. The Rio Grande de Santiago is crossed not far from its outlet into Lake Chapala, the largest fresh-water lake in the Republic, not visible from the train, although a faint, shimmering light in the distance indicates its location. There is a grand fall on the Santiago river, we are told, but that, too, must remain a matter of faith, as it is not within range of the road. Spanning this same stream, the second river, in size, of Mexico, is the famous Bridge of Calderon, an old, stone structure, where Hidalgo was defeated in 1811 by the Spaniards.

Guadalajara is the capital of the State of Jalisco, and is the second city in magnificence, and in the number of inhabitants, in the country. Until the very recent completion of the railroad connecting it with its sister cities of the Republic, all transportation to and fro has been by wagons, mules and peon porters, hence it has been very

self-dependent, and is proud, aristocratic and thoroughly Mexican. Its importance and prosperity will rapidly increase with the improved facilities for transportation, especially when the line now building to San Blas on the coast is completed, thus giving a new line from the Pacific to the capital, and a complete cross-line from gulf to ocean.

It was a great surprise to find a city that had been, until recently, so entirely shut in from the world, enjoying the luxuries of electric lights and good street-car accommodations, yet thus it was, long before the railroad came. Only ten years after the overthrow of the City of Mexico, Guadalajara was founded by Nunez Guzman, one of the captains of that conquest. It is exceedingly beautiful, with its streets wide and well laid out, with numbers of charming plazas and with lovely outlying scenery. After the Mexican fashion the grand, central plaza is surrounded by the principal public buildings, the great Cathedral and parish church, and the portales, or stores. To describe the Cathedral is impossible; even a photograph of it gives but an inadequate conception of the magnificent edifice. The front is heavily yet gracefully carved in solid stone, with fluted pillars that enclose niches bearing stately statues. Twin towers arise from the corners, lifting their surmounting crosses into pinnacled heights, and the dome over-arching the central roof is encased with richly colored tiles.

The interior impresses us with its silent, vault-

ed splendor. Immense quadruple columns support the arches of the roof that seem gracefully airy at their great height, although built of solid stone. The dome is brilliantly frescoed, and the choir is as superb as gilding and carving can make it. On a level with the huge capitals of the pillars a narrow gallery of bronze-metal bands the entire building, and under the great dome is a magnificent altar in white and gold decorations. The cathedrals of the City of Mexico and of Puebla are said to be grander; hardly can any be more beautiful.

The hospital of San Miguel de Belan is a prominent institution, embracing both a hospital and a lunatic asylum. It was founded in 1787, and once had immense revenues from the property with which it was endowed; but it has passed through many changes and reverses and is now but partly self-supporting, the city and state contributing a portion to defray expenses. Of still greater proportions and of larger beneficence is the Hospicio de Guadalajara. Its vast buildings, with walls of enormous thickness surmounted by domed roofs, cover several acres of ground and enclose some twenty court-yards, each surrounded by arched corridors. A thousand inmates are sheltered within its charitable walls, from the babe deserted in the streets to the skilled artisan ready to go out into the world proficiently trained for his work. It is at once a foundling and orphan asy-

lum, a juvenile school, reform school, school of arts and of mechanics, high-school, asylum for the blind, and deaf, and dumb, and for the indigent and aged a work-shop, college and hospital.

Two Indian specialties are carried to a high degree of perfection at Guadalajara: the exquisite, lace-like drawn-work, that is truly a marvel of dainty art, and the pottery, consisting of statuettes, vases, clay images, ornaments and utensils of almost every conceivable kind, and for which the city is justly famous. It is affirmed that every man, woman and child in Guadalajara is a born artist. Would that some of our American dabblers in pottery could go there and be born again!

The suburban village of San Pedro, reached by tramway from the city, is the headquarters of the pottery industries, carried on chiefly by the peons, in their own meagre huts, where they mould, decorate and burn their wares. Here, as well as at the Plaza de Toros and in many shops in the city, may be found, for sale, cart-loads of it, of every size and of every variety, from tiny toy cups to flower vases three feet high. Busts and statuettes are here made representing every noted man of the country, past and present, and clay images that exactly copy the natives in every grade of life. From a photograph, or from a short study of one's face, these natural artists will model a miniature *fac-simile* of his customer in a few hours. The water-jars, of a fine glazed ware, enameled in colors and

artistically decorated in bronze and gilt, are among their handsomest pieces. Those of a more common, porous ware are preferred for service, as the constant evaporation through the pores keeps the water remarkably fresh and cool. There are also other important manufacturing interests in and about Guadalajara, that have served to make this the thriving business city that she is, in spite of her isolated position.

The Alameda is a great place of public resort, having a delightful promenade, and a tree-lined carriage drive. The military band frequently furnishes most thrilling music here, when the park is thronged with the concert-loving natives of all classes. Bull-fighting is the master-passion with Mexicans; but gambling, concert-going and the theatre are also sources of never-ending delight. Lotteries are carried on under government license, and in some cities tickets are constantly thrust in the faces of the passers-by, especially by women and children, with many and varied pleadings in soft Mexican Spanish, and with many assurances that the Holy Virgin will bless the buyer with prizes of—no telling how much. But our faith in the Virgin's control of the chances of lotteries does not warrant us in risking our Mexican dollar.

The churches and plazas, worth visiting here, are too numerous for more than a passing glance from the tourist hurrying through the country. However, there is one trip, that out to the Bar-

ranca de Portillo, which must be taken leisurely, if taken at all. As it is one of the points of interest about Guadalajara we determined to give it a day, in the way of a picnic excursion. It is reached by tramway to the Temecal factory, but thence for five miles the venturesome traveler, who wishes to do the correct thing, must proceed on burro-back at the cost of *cuatro reales*, or four bits each. Burros are always plentiful in this land. It is a patient little animal, said to feed luxuriously on tin cans and brown paper, and certainly thriving in a pasture of thistles and cacti. It appeals irresistibly to your sympathies, and you imagine that you could never be induced to urge it out of its natural gait by the cruel application of whip or spur. But have you ever ridden one? Try it for a while, and sympathy will vanish as dew before the sunshine. You will lay on the whip with renewing energy at every step, the stolid indifference with which your efforts are received vainly increasing the violence of your blows, and finally you come almost to esteem the methods by which the Mexican manages partly to overcome the obstinacy of his beast. He rides it without bridle, guiding it to the right or left, accordingly as he wishes to turn, by a far from gentle blow on this or on that side of the head with a sharp-pointed stick, with which he also goads the burro's shoulder, keeping a chronic wound in the thick skin, through which he reaches its sensibilities. His stirrups are short

and his legs bowed out, so that his heels can be constantly kept in motion against its sides, prodding it at every step with stick and spur. Thus with shoulders rolling, arms working and legs plying, a Mexican riding a burro forms a picture with as much motion to the square inch as that of a bucking bronco, or a kicking mule attacked by a swarm of bees.

Our trip was tedious and often discouragingly slow; but by having our guide ride in the rear of the party, prodding first one and then another of the burros, he managed to keep the cavalcade on the move. Some portions of the road, as we neared the more rugged country, or strayed into the by-ways, are mere goat paths, and are hardly passable for any beast of burden except the burro—uneven and full of mesquite roots, and stumps of the prickly nopal, and ruts, and ridges. It is of the kind described by the Mexicans as *buen camino de pajaros*, a good road for birds. Other portions are through cultivated meadows and great fields of sugar-cane and maize, for the state of Jalisco is one of the most fertile in the Republic.

Reaching our destination we find the Barranca to be a deep valley or cañon, dropping down from the plain, and watered by the Santiago river. Winding down its precipitous sides we find it very beautiful, with a luxuriant growth of tropical plants and flowers, as new to us and as lovely as anything we have yet seen. No spot more

charming for a picnic could have been selected than this—under the fresh, broad-leaved, clustering branches, with the river flowing below. We learned here by a sad experience to be careful not to become entangled with the thorns of the prickly-pear, nor to yield too readily to the desire to gather from it the tempting scarlet flowers that burst from the twisting shoots, like fiery-red flames. There are some grand views across country to the green-clad spurs of the Sierras, and all in all the trip was voted a great success, even though the burros were not.

The last day of our stop in this princely city has been spent, for, in the morning, after packing away in bags and baskets enough of the unique Guadalajara pottery to make us tremble at the thought of custom-officials, we start en route for the main line of the Central Railway, where we connect for the city of Queretaro.

CHAPTER XI.

QUERETARO THE CITY OF CHURCHES.

THERE is no event more pathetic nor more important in the annals of modern history than that which culminated in the death-blow to Maximilian and his empire one sunny June morning at Queretaro. This beautiful city dates its antiquity back to the fifteenth century, when it was founded, and soon became a flourishing Aztec village. It was subsequently destroyed by the Spaniards in their sweeping conquest of the country; but it was rebuilt on the same site, and is now one of the finest cities of the Republic. It is delightfully located on the edge of a wide and fertile plain bordered by slow-rising mountains whose fringes lie close to the northern city limits. There are many beautiful residences and noble edifices, and the churches seem almost as numerous as trees in the forest. Yet it was here in the midst of her stately cathedrals and under the sound of their ever-ringing bells that the power of the Romish Church was forever broken in Mexico.

The beautiful plazas, the shaded alamedas, the prosperous mills and the cheerful, busy life of the

streets contain no hint of that dark time when contending armies fiercely struggled for supremacy. Only the three crosses on *Cerro de las Campanas* tell the tragic story of the final overthrow of monarchical government and Church rule. With indefatigable energy and unswerving will the Church party had opposed every step towards intellectual or political liberty. The contest began when, more than a half-century ago, Hidalgo lighted the torch of freedom whose flames, long smoldering but never-extinguished, have spread throughout the land.

At that time the Church of Mexico was the most corrupt in the world. It was, in fact, an out-flowing current of the great parent power that has its head-waters in the Vatican at Rome, whence radiate streams of degradation, corruption and superstition to all parts of the earth. With characteristic regard to self-interest it gave to the Throne of Castile its powerful aid to retain her grasp on the colony of New Spain, just so long as it was for its own benefit to do so. But when the successful revolution of the Emperor Iturbide seemed to promise to Catholicism the mastery of the New World, as well as of the Old, the Pope of Rome withdrew his support from Spain and lent a helping hand to the cause of Mexico. As soon, however, as the Government protested against papal oppression, and the Pope perceived the spirit of the people drifting towards

religious as well as political liberty, he immediately became a bitter and unyielding enemy. The Church party, having a hold on the superstitions of the masses and being in possession of more than one-half of all the wealth of the nation, now powerfully opposed the Republic; but the onward press for freedom was irresistible.

For a long period of years the country was torn up by internal feuds, and impoverished by ever-changing forms of government and by ever-varying rulers. In 1846 it was proposed in congress that the Church should share its proportion of the state expenses; but the measure was overwhelmingly defeated, and its advocate driven from the country in disgrace.

At this time, however, Juarez appeared and soon became an invincible champion of liberalism and freedom. Born of obscure Indian parentage in 1806, he was unable to read or write, and was totally ignorant of the Spanish language when he left his native hamlet at the age of twelve. After acquiring an education he studied law, and entered the field of politics as his natural sphere of action. Under Alvarez he was appointed Minister of Justice and of Ecclesiastical Affairs, and with the ratification of congress he instituted sweeping measures of reform. He pronounced to the people the liberty of the press, and the freedom of religious thought, and in his celebrated Code of Law he "abolished the whole system of class legislation,

suppressed the military and ecclesiastical *fueros*—privileged and special tribunals and charters of the army and clergy—and established, for the first time in Mexico, equality of the citizens before the law.”

This announcement brought on a revolution, and Alvarez, as head of the aggressive government, was forced to retire. Comonfort now became President. Although liberal at heart, his weak desire to please each side soon won the enmity of both. After his vacillating policy had betrayed the Government into the hands of the Church party he was abandoned and compelled to flee the country.

The leadership of the liberalists then devolved upon Juarez, who established himself with his cabinet at Vera Cruz and commenced the Three Years War of Reform, which terminated in a victory for his party and in the election of Juarez to the presidency. But the nation was totally exhausted by its long struggle, and the public treasury was utterly depleted. Over this grave financial difficulty there were serious dissensions, even in the cabinet; and the mistake was made of suspending all payments of foreign loans, or the interest thereon. England, France and Spain were creditors to the amounts of many millions each, and these nations made this common indebtedness a pretext to form a triple alliance to interfere in Mexican affairs. In 1861 they took possession of the harbor and custom-house at Vera Cruz. Meeting with the determined opposition of Juarez, and in the face of

the now declared intentions of Louis Napoleon, of establishing a dependent monarchy in Mexico, England and Spain concluded a treaty and withdrew their fleets.

The French commanders refused all negotiations and marched their army into the country. At Puebla they met the republican troops, and were signally defeated. Napoleon III., finding it a more serious matter than he had expected to subdue the Mexican people, sent over a largely increased force, and finally the garrison at Puebla, after it had entirely exhausted its ammunition and had been reduced to starvation, was forced to capitulate. Its leaders, however, refused to sign parole and fled to the North. The French and Church party then had complete control and marched to the possession of the capital city. Here they chose Almonte for temporary President—a mere tool in their hands. By him the Assembly of Notables was appointed; and they, in turn, under the pretense of obeying the will of the nation, declared in favor of a limited monarchy to be invested in a Catholic prince approved by the papal See and by Louis Napoleon of France. These powers declared in favor of the brother of the Emperor of Austria, Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian, born in 1832, and educated under the refining influences of court favor. In 1857 he was given the command of the entire Austrian navy, for which profession he had fully prepared himself. During

a visit to Paris he became the guest of Emperor Napoleon, by whom he was received with great honor, and a warm friendship soon grew up between them. He was married to Princess Carlotta, daughter of the King of Belgium, a highly accomplished, refined and beautiful woman.

When tendered the imperial crown of Mexico, Maximilian, as if warned by the dark shadow of his impending fate, refused to accept it unless called by the popular vote of the nation. This the assembly ostensibly secured, and in the spring of 1864 Maximilian and Carlotta, under French escort and attended by the special blessing of the Pope, sailed over the sea to the foreign land they had been summoned to govern. At Vera Cruz they were received by the Church party with imperial splendor, and the empire was established: but its foundation had no deep roots in the hearts of the people burning under the insult of foreign intervention. The brilliant display of fire-works, the ceremonious pomp and the superficial greetings were but chilling welcome to the young ruler, who said to Mejia on his reception: "I care not for words, but for hearts." These, however, he could not win with sceptre and crown. Although possessed of brilliant attainments and of noble bearing, he was not born to be a ruler of men. While courageous and sincere he had not the persevering energy necessary for one who would conduct an empire.

For a time the imperial army, with its Austrian and French battalions, was every-where victorious; and the Juarists were pushed to the northern limits of the country. Maximilian lived in royal splendor at the capital, where he caused many improvements to be made. The castle of Chapultepec was also reconstructed, and the beautiful drive, now known as the Grand Paseo, was built from the city out to its noble groves. But the heavy expense of sustaining a court and foreign army soon drained the public treasury, and large loans had to be solicited in London.

The republican forces under the able command of Diaz, now President of Mexico, began to harass successfully the imperial armies, gaining in numbers and in courage with each victory. Then the sister Republic of the United States, issuing victoriously from its own dark cloud of civil war, took a hand in the affairs, and issued a protest against foreign intervention on the American continent. Secretary Seward wrote to the French court something as follows: "The Government of the United States had long recognized, and still continues to recognize, the constitutional government of the United States of Mexico as the sovereign authority in that country, and Benito Juarez as its chief." To our minister in France he wrote: "The presence and operations of the French army in Mexico, and the maintenance of an authority there, resting upon force and not upon the free-will of

the people, is a cause of serious concern to the United States of America."

The correspondence continued, and our Government finally intimated very definitely that it would be perfectly agreeable to her if France would find it convenient and "compatible with its best interests and high honor to withdraw from its aggressive attitude in Mexico." In accordance with this position the United States troops were marshaled on the Rio Grande frontier prepared to enforce, if need be, the provisos of the Monroe doctrine.

This was a contingency Napoleon was not prepared to meet, and the futility of his scheme to control Mexican affairs appearing, he announced his intentions to withdraw his army, which he did in the following February. This was a fearful blow to Maximilian, who sent his noble wife to the French court to plead with his patron, but in vain. She next sought aid in Rome, where, crushed with the hopelessness of her cause, her reason gave way, and she was taken to her childhood home in Belgium, a mental wreck.

Maximilian now prepared to abdicate his ill-starred throne, but the Church party seeing utter ruin to them in his departure, induced him to remain. They had hoped, with the aid of Catholic France, to regain hold on the reins of Government and once more establish papal supremacy in Mexico. They well knew that, deserted by their leader

the republican representatives would soon sweep the country, and that the edicts against their order, defeated under Alvarez, would then be fully carried into effect. Their only hope lay in success. With renewed vigor they strengthened their lines and offered a desperate resistance to the forces of Juarez; but they were continuously defeated.

A final stand was made at Queretaro, with Maximilian in person at the head of his army, equally and courageously sharing with his soldiers the hardships of war. The city was closely pressed and was ill-prepared to withstand a siege on account of the overlooking hills from which it was commanded by the enemy. Finally, after repeated struggles, the republican forces made an entrance into the city, probably through the treachery of Captain Lopez, one of the officers of Maximilian's army. Finding escape impossible the Emperor with his whole force surrendered, declared his relinquishment of the Government, and offered to leave the country. But the Mexican Republic could not so easily forgive the usurpation of her rights. The blood of her murdered sons, fallen in battle and by the cruel proscription lists issued by him against political prisoners, cried aloud for vengeance. Maximilian was given a trial by court-martial, and was sentenced to be shot with his two Generals, Miramon and Mejia. Every effort was exerted by his friends to obtain his pardon, but to no purpose. President Juarez was appealed

to in vain; the United States could not be induced to interfere; Louis Napoleon had abandoned him to his fate; and even the Austrian Emperor came not to his own brother's rescue. On the eve of his death the saddened soul of the fallen prince breathed itself into a farewell letter to his absent and dementate wife:

"To My Beloved Carlotta: If God ever permits you to recover, and read this, you will learn the cruelty of the fate which has not ceased to pursue me since your departure for Europe. You carried with you my soul and my happiness. Why did I not listen to you? So many events, alas! so many unexpected and unmerited catastrophes have overwhelmed me that I have no hope in my heart, and I await death as a delivering angel. I die without agony. I shall fall with glory, like a conquered King. If you have not power to bear so much suffering, if God soon reunites us, I shall bless the divine and paternal hand which has so rudely stricken us.

Adieu! Adieu!

THY POOR MAX."

The following morning, when the early sun was kissing the awakening flowers, when the soft winds were whispering the bright promise of the day, and when all nature was teeming with happy life, the vanquished Emperor and his Generals were marched by a squad of infantry from the convent cells, where they had been imprisoned, to the Hill of Bells, there to meet their doom.

There they stand with their backs to a low, broken wall, Maximilian on the right with an

upraised crucifix in his hand, Mejia on the left with arms folded, and Miramon clasping his written defense, all facing the line of soldiers waiting the word of command that shall sound their death-knell. The fatal order given, a simultaneous volley, and the three great leaders of Catholicism in Mexico fall forever. The agony of that last, long gaze upon the fair earth, before the crack of the rifles sent them

"Forth into the darkness,"

seems expiation sufficient for every mistake or crime they may have committed. Yesterday ambition lived, and the soul stirred with hopes as fond and sweet as songs of birds at mating-time. Life was in its prime, and rich with all things great; to-day, death and the grave!

"The glories of our birth and state
Are shadows, not substantial things!
There is no armor against fate—
Death lays his icy hands on kings;
Sceptre and crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade."

Although our hearts throb with anguish over the sufferings of ill-fated Maximilian and his stricken Queen, now a hopeless maniac lingering in a living death, it is not for this age to judge of the extremities of the measures required by those dark and troublous times. Maximilian was

no doubt honest in his belief that he had been called to Mexico by the voice of her people; doubtless, too, he was sincerely desirous of bringing peace, prosperity, and the greatest good to his subjects. The very foundation of his empire, however, rested on the continuance of those very oppressions which the sons of Mexico had struggled against since their first efforts to throw off the heavy yoke of Spain. His empire was forcibly sustained by foreign power and by foreign troops fighting against the will of the people; and when patriotism rose victorious it seemed necessary to deal a blow powerful enough to completely crush her enemies and cause her to rank among the nations of the world, as one not only able but determined to conduct her own affairs.

In the eloquent language of one writing on the very spot of the great triple tragedy, and but a few months after the sad event:

“When the sharp crash of the volley came, the three usurpers rolled upon the ground. Mejia and Miramon died instantly; but Maximilian repeatedly clapped his hand on his head as if in agony, and expired with a struggle, as the echoes of the muskets died away among the cañons of the distant Sierra. Died away, did I say? No, not there nor then! Those echoes rolled across the broad Atlantic and shook every throne in Europe. The royal plotter against the liberties of men heard them in his palace by the Seine, and grew pale as

he listened. They rolled over the Pyrenees, and the throne of Isabella began to crumble; over the Alps, and every monarch from Italy to the farthest East heard in them the rumblings of the coming earthquake—the prelude to the fall of empires. They will roll on, and on, through the coming ages, and be answered by the uprising millions of future generations, until ‘kingly prerogatives,’ and ‘divine right’ are things of the past. The world had waited long for these echoes, and was better when it heard them at last.”

There is current in Mexico a serio-comic story connected with the fate of Miramon, which is tempting to relate as illustrating the characteristic ease with which an Irishman can turn even a revolution to his own account. Miramon’s daughter was married to a native of Ireland, by name, plain *Patrick Miles*, softened, however, after his residence in Mexico to the more euphonious *Patrucio Milmo*. After the capture of Miramon it was intimated to Señor Milmo that the sum of three millions of dollars, easily raised on the estates of his father-in-law, would secure his release; but the alert Irishman, perceiving an opportunity, suddenly became too conscientious a patriot to consider for a moment the question of buying the pardon of a traitor to his country, even though the prisoner were his own father by marriage. Señor Milmo, therefore, was not slow in returning an answer, of which the following is a free translation: “He is

not worth it." In consequence Miramon fell and Señor Patrucio Milmo is now a great Mexican banker, and one of the richest men of the Republic.

Soon after the disastrous close of the short reign of Maximilian, and while his death-volley was still ringing throughout the civilized world, arousing in some hearts a feeling of sympathy, in others a sense of rejoicing, Church supremacy in Mexico came to an end, and the Republic was assured. By request of his brother the body of the dead Emperor was embalmed and sent to Austria, and was buried in the Church of the Holy Cross at Innsbruck, crossing the ocean in the self-same vessel in which, three short years before, he had sailed over the Atlantic to establish and perpetuate his throne in New Spain.

One of the heroes of the world
Fought to conquer, and fought to fail;
Slain he fell in his blood-stained mail,
And over his form the people stopt;
His cause was lost and his banner furled,
And only a shattered woman wept.

CHAPTER XII.

INDUSTRIES OF QUERÉTARO.

IT is the history of all primitive peoples that they put off their uncouth robes of skins stripped from the wild forest-beasts stricken by poisoned arrows, as they begin to rise from a savage to a semi-civilized state, and that the arts of spinning and weaving grow and thrive among them almost as naturally as the cotton in their fields. The ancient races of Mexico took this step toward advancement at an earlier age than the light of history penetrates, and perhaps as early as any known nation of the world. When the Spaniards entered the country the proficiency of cotton-cloth manufactures, the brilliancy of the dyes, and the gracefulness of the interwoven patterns were matters of great surprise and admiration.

As a general industry, however, manufacturing here does not flourish, even though protected by heavy duties against foreign competition. The extreme high price of fuel and the scarcity of water are difficulties against which not even the low rates of labor can sufficiently weigh to make Mexico a prosperous manufacturing country. Steam is little

used, and mills run by water-power are necessarily scarce, for want of merry mountain brooks to "ever and anon put their broad shoulders to the wheel and show that they can labor as well as laugh."

The United States, especially along the border, reaps the direct benefit from this condition of affairs, and were it not for the high import tax on our wares American manufacturers could flood the Mexican markets with a superior quality of goods at much lower prices than are now paid for inferior articles of their own make. In this whole vast country there are only about one hundred factories all told, representing in round numbers fifteen millions of dollars. Cotton and woolen goods are the most extensive productions, paper of a poor grade is made, and leathern goods of all kinds, coarse flour, straw and felt hats, baskets, brushes, silk, glass, rope, matting, canton-flannels, palm-leaf wares, cochineal dyes, chocolate, cocoa, sugar, candles, tiles and a great variety of Mexican pottery.

The famous Hercules cotton factory at Querétaro is the largest of any sort in the Republic. This extensive establishment, founded fifty years ago, has cost some four millions of dollars, and its owners, the Don Rubio family, are among the richest proprietors in Mexico. Taking a somewhat doubtful-looking vehicle, a sort of combination of the cab and the coach, our party drove from the beautiful little plaza, where we had been lin-

gering in delight, through the picturesque streets to the dingy outskirts, passing on the way the massive stone aqueduct which supplies the thrifty city with water. It was built by the *Marquis Del Villar de la Aguilar*, one of Queretaro's wealthy citizens, in fulfillment, it is reputed, of a wager with another Mexican Vanderbilt, possessed of more money than sense, who promised on his part to erect a shrine and life-size statue of the Virgin in solid silver. Both agreements are said to have been faithfully carried out by the parties to the contract, but while on the one hand we have in testimony the aqueduct, with its stately arches rising, across the valley, sometimes to a height of ninety feet, on the other hand the silver shrine, if it were ever built, must have long ago found its way to the mint. At least we could not learn of its present existence, greatly to the regret of our irrepressible, who sadly mourned his lost opportunity of requesting the honor of a silver maiden's hand.

A short drive beyond the city brought us to the gates of the great cotton-mill, looking more like a veritable fortress than a place of peaceful industry, if one were to judge from the high, thick walls, set with rising towers, which enclose a large tract of land, and from the massive gate-ways opening therein. This means of protection, supplemented by a small army of riflemen, has enabled the proprietors to outlive revolutions and

riots and repel many a band of marauders. Many a thrilling tale is told of the desperate attempts of banditti to unman the walls and capture this stronghold of wealth; but in this they were never successful, for the Don Rubios were generals as well as financiers. Until recently such means of private defense was a prime requisite to success in any undertaking in Mexico, as the Government was more than busy with its own affairs.

Entering the gates the scene is strikingly beautiful. The handsome dwellings of the Rubio family are surrounded by an extensive park adorned with tropical flowers and fruits, winding walks, fountains, and an artificial lake starry with golden lilies. In the centre stands an imposing statue of Hercules. Back of the residences are the guard-house, mill-buildings and warehouses. Both water and steam powers are used. The little river, of which Queretaro is fortunately possessed, is made to turn one of the largest overshot wheels in the world, over fifty feet in diameter, and steam is brought into requisition to run the massive Corliss engine imported from Rhode Island. Wood, costing from fifteen to sixteen dollars a cord, is used for fuel. There are some eighteen hundred laborers, both men and women, working ten and twelve hours a day, employed in this giant factory, the spinners receiving from thirty to fifty cents a day, the weavers averaging six dollars a week. The mills turn out immense quantities of coarse, un-

bleached cloth, called manta, used universally for the clothing of the laboring class in Mexico, to whom it is sold at a great profit.

Quite a large, independent town is clustered about the mills, made up entirely of its operatives and their families. They are said to be a quiet, industrious class, and only once since the opening of the mills have the proprietors been troubled with the strike-problem. They succeeded in solving it by shutting down the mills until the employés were forced to return to their terrible grind, hopeless of obtaining any advance from their established wages, which in any other country would hardly be adequate against starvation. Their bitterness sought to avenge itself by an attack on the chief of the house, who was stabbed by the knife of an assassin the first time he ventured out alone after the strike-failure. No further trouble occurred, and Don Rubio recovered, and his mills are now among the most prosperous in the Republic.

Another industry at Queretaro consists in the grinding and polishing of opals. Many beautiful varieties of this stone are found in Mexico, especially in the state of Queretaro, where some of the richest opal mines in the world have been opened, yielding quantities of fine gems of a great diversity of colors, ranging from a black to a cream-white, with shades of blue, red, green, yellow, and an exquisite shade of pink. "Of all precious

stones," says Pliny, "the opal is the most difficult of description, as it appears to combine in one gem the beauties of many other species—the fire of the carbuncle, the purple of the amethyst, the green of the emerald and the yellow of the topaz."

The poet thus beautifully describes the

BIRTH OF THE OPAL.

Once a dew-drop came with a spark of flame,
He had caught from the sun's last ray,
To a violet's breast where he lay at rest
Till the dawn of the coming day.

And the rose looked down with a blush and frown;
But she smiled with delight to view
Her bewitching form with its coloring warm
As reflected to her by the dew.

Then the dew-drop took an enchanted look
At the sky in a blaze of blue;
And a leaflet green in its silvery sheen
Met the eyes of the watcher too.

As he thus reclined the congealing wind
Swept his face as he looked around;
And a maiden fair who was walking there
In the morning an *opal* found.

The Turks have a fashion for believing that the opal falls from heaven in the lightning's flash. "A pearl with a fire in it," some one has called it. This well describes the beautiful variety known as the fire-opal, possessing the pure, creamy lustre of the pearl, enriched with flame-like reflections of

amaranthine red, changing to honey-yellow, and often emitting every prismatic tint. This marvelous play of colors is thought by some chemists to come from water imprisoned in the gem; but the eminent philosopher, Sir Isaac Newton, believed the iridescence to be due to the reflection and refraction of light caused by the presence of microscopic air-cells, and invisible fissures. Other scientists believe that the beautiful and variegated colors are the result of laminæ differing slightly in their degrees of transparency. Whatever may be the philosophical explanation for the inborn beauty of the opal it is generally admitted that its chief charm lies in its many imperfections.

The records of the opal mines of the ancients have been lost to history, but it is supposed that the gem was found in India, Syria and Arabia, and was sought as a favorite of the royalty of all nations. The value then, as now, depended upon its size, uniformity and fiery colorings. It was rarely found in those countries of any remarkable size in perfection, the famous opal of Nonius being no larger than a hazel-nut, yet a gem so highly prized by its possessor that he preferred exile rather than surrender it to Marc Antony. This celebrated and antique gem has enjoyed a play of values almost equal to its play of colors, ranging from a hundred thousand dollars to a full million. Its whereabouts is now unknown, and it is highly probable that its glories have well-nigh faded.

It is almost an impossibility to engrave the opal without destroying its beauty, although a few ancient and perfect *intaglios* in the stone have been handed down to modern times. One notable specimen, engraved with the heads of Jupiter, Diana and Apollo, may be seen in the Praun collection of antique gems.

Up to the present time the mines of Hungary, discovered in the fifteenth century, have yielded the finest and most durable opals known, but it is thought and hoped that those of Mexico, when properly developed, will be found of equal importance, as valuable gems have been discovered in localities widely separated, many even of large size and of uniform structure, and exhibiting a play of rainbow colors as brilliant as the rarest ever found. Although more brittle than the Hungarian species, the intensity and splendor of its hues withstand atmospheric changes quite as well, and are even more gorgeously beautiful. It occurs in various sizes, qualities and colors in a hard, brittle trachyte, and sometimes in a porcelain earth, in irregular, branching veins. The resplendent fire-opal, the most charming of all the many varieties of this stone, is obtained in its greatest perfection in porphyritic rock at Zimapan, Mexico. The wonderful mitre on the idol of Quetzalcoatl at Cholula, described by the Spaniards as waving with plumes of fire, is thought to have been an effect of this beautiful gem.

The Empress Josephine was the fortunate owner of a wonderful fire-opal, perhaps the most noted on record. It was called the "Burning of Troy," because of the countless flashes of red flame it emitted, as though it were on fire. It is described as "perfectly opaque on the under side, but the upper portion being transparent, served the purpose of a window through which were seen the glowing rays of fiery light, very appropriately compared to the conflagration of a great city."

The black variety of opal is considered very rare, and the pink shades are much in favor, but the beauty, as well as the value, of any of these gems depends chiefly upon its fire, and the price may vary from five dollars to five thousand for stones of equal weight.

The superstitious fancies connected with this stone are interesting, and are as various as they are numerous. At times it has even been regarded as sacred, and as assuring the smile of the gods on the fortunate possessor. Among the Romans its popularity is a matter of history. During the last century it lost caste because of its ill-omened reputation of being an unlucky stone, reputed to bring misfortunes to the wearer; but this superstition is disappearing, and the beautiful gem is again coming into general favor. It is unsuited for settings in rings, however, as it is liable to injury from contact with water, or oily substances, and in danger of cracking or los-

ing its iridescence, if exposed to sudden changes of temperature. For other ornaments it constitutes one of the most attractive of gems, and when encircled with diamonds, hardly has it a rival in the jeweler's art.

The polishing of the opal is done by means of fine stones, and the Mexican is an expert in the art. Great quantities of these stones ready for setting may be seen in the shops of Queretaro, and agents sell them on the streets of the city and about the station. Some very rare gems may often be picked up at the mines, or through an agent, at a great bargain if the purchaser knows how to deal with the wily Mexican, and is capable of judging for himself of the values of his specimens. Many tricks are played in order to deceive the buyer, and unless something of an expert he is almost certain to be caught with an inferior stone. The price first asked, too, is always exorbitant, and great caution is necessary in carrying on the whole transaction.

The valley about Queretaro is productive of wheat and corn, and cotton is raised to some extent. Two pickings a year are possible here and in many parts of Mexico, although cotton-raising is not nearly as extensive as it would be if the mechanical appliances for handling the product were more scientifically and practically constructed. At present much of the raw material is imported from Louisiana.

Another industry of these regions is the growing of the maguey plant, and one of the most wonderful productions natural to the soil of Mexico. It grows to greater perfection and larger proportions at the higher altitudes, and it is extensively cultivated for various purposes in both the *tierras templada* and *tierras fria*. The region westward from the City of Mexico toward the gulf, and on the very edge of the plateau, is most famous for the growth of this plant, and great fields of it, planted in concise rows, stretch out over the country for miles.

The town of Apam, about sixty miles from the city, is the centre of the pulque district, where the liquor fermented from the juice of the maguey constitutes a great industry. From time immemorial it has been the favorite national beverage, and is universally found in the hovels of the poor as well as on the well-filled tables of the rich. The plant belongs to the great cactus family, and is the same as our century plant. Maturing in ten years in this district, where it reaches an enormous height and size, it sends up a central flower-stalk which is cut down before coming to perfection, and a cup-shaped incision is made into its trunk in which the sap collects. Men then walk from plant to plant, drawing the fluid out through tubes by suction, diverting it by reverse pressure into pig-skins strapped to their backs. In this form it is known as honey-water. Fermented it becomes pulque, a sour, milky

liquor, horribly like spoiled buttermilk, fearfully distasteful to the uninitiated, and very intoxicating. The distilled juice makes the common whiskey, or *agua diente*, and other alcoholic liquors of the country. From the pulp of the maguey different grades of paper are made, and from the fiber are manufactured twine, rope, and the large, coarse mats so universally used by the poor for chairs by day and beds by night, the carpet under them and the awning over them at the market-stands. The thorns at the tips of the leaves are formed into needles for the poor, and the fibrous strings stripped from the sides are used for thread. The great, fleshy leaves are also formed into troughs, and from the presence of ammonia in the plant-juices ice is readily made. The fruit when allowed to ripen is edible, and the plant seems to be one of universal beneficence. In short, what the date is to the Arab, the maguey is to the Mexican.

CHAPTER XIII.

TULA AND THE VALLEY OF MEXICO.

AS we are leaving the fair and historic city of Queretaro the sweetly solemn strokes of the *Angelus* are chiming from the many towers, each of the forty churches taking up the refrain in irregular succession and mingling their tones in harmonious discord. It is the call of grace to the Virgin, and the good Catholic, no matter where, nor how engaged, stops in his labor or in his pleasure to respond to the moment of prayer. The poor peon, loaded with his water-bottles just filled at the plaza-fountain, the market-men and women bearing huge baskets of vegetables and fruits on their heads, ragged children suffering or merry, even the *cargador*, with heavy crates of merchandise strapped to his back, under which he is staggering to the custom-house—all these halt a moment, lower their heavy burdens, if possible, or with them poised on bended backs, and with their poor, brimless or crownless hats removed, stand with lowered eyes in obedient prayer as long as the bells toll their saintly message. The idea is beautiful, if it but raise their darkened minds, and

fills their crushed hearts with hopes of paradise; but instead, their prayer is but the repetition of meaningless words, an added superstition whose observance will never elevate, any more than the form of turning to the East and calling aloud to Allah, in answer to the toscin, will elevate or Christianize the Turk. As the last tones die away to be echoed by churches farther on, the busy wheels of life roll onward as before; the libertine walks on in his pleasure, the laborer resumes his dreary way, and crime completes the task it had impiously begun.

In the midst of these reflections the morning train, with its engine puffing and blowing, comes thundering upon the scene. When first the iron-ribbed, flame-breathing horse was introduced in the country the Mexicans thought it a direct visitation of the devil in this terrible form, coming to destroy them. One community, determined to baffle this infliction by the power of their favorite saint, took his sacred image from its shrine in the temple and placed it triumphantly in the path of the dreaded monster, the people meantime kneeling by the way side fervently praying, and firm in the belief that his course would be forever checked. Soon he comes tearing by, heeding neither obstruction nor prayers, and they raise their heads to find that naught remains of their worshiped saint but a few fragments and a cloud of dust. Carefully collecting these holy relics they return them

to the church with faith unshaken in their saint's spiritual ability to answer prayer, but not anxious to again try his physical powers against a steam-engine.

The way from Queretaro takes us under one of the arches of the aqueduct, past the Rubio mills and across the fertile valley, and then the road begins to climb up among the mountains, reaching an elevation of more than eight thousand feet, a little beyond Marquez. From this point it descends again suddenly into the Tula valley, rich in foliage and flowers, and dear to memory as the place where, under the witchery of Prescott's charming words, we lingered over the tale of this once grand seat of the ancient civilization of the Toltecs. The history of that primitive race is envolved in doubt and shadowy tradition; but it is adjudged that they came from their northern home more than twelve hundred years ago, and arriving at this fair valley they commenced the building of their city and established their empire. Here they existed for some four centuries, when drought, pestilence and famine dispersed their tribes and drove them southward, only a few scattered remnants remaining in the land. The Chichimecs, a term applied to many rude tribes, succeeded them; and eventually the Aztecs, coming also from the North, took up their abode here for a century previous to their location in the valley of Anahuac, or Mexico.

Strong evidences appear for believing that the Toltecs were identical with the prehistoric race once spread over large portions of the Western Continent, and known to us as the Mound-Builders. Undoubtedly they were a race of higher type than any of their Indian successors, as appears from a study of their mounds and of their interesting remains found buried within. Among their relics have been discovered imperfect specimens of knives made from obsidian, a volcanic production only found native in Mexico. Therefore it is argued that this ancient tribe, after having run its course in the South, was for some unknown reason driven northward at an age extremely remote, and that their migratory period, of which we have the first legendary history, represents their second coming to this region.

To the Toltecs is attributed the highest and oldest civilization of the New World. From them the Aztecs acquired the arts of skillfully working gold and silver, of building, and of picture-writing. The Toltecs were well versed in agriculture, and introduced maize and cotton into Mexico, and from them also came the calendar system in use among the Aztecs until the Spanish Conquest. With them is associated the mythical legend of Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent, sometimes the chief deity or God of the Air, sometimes the wise and beneficent ruler of men. His story is of northern origin, and by some writers he is be-

lieved to have been a Toltec sovereign; but he is described as belonging to a different race, of fair complexion, long, dark hair, commanding features, flowing beard, and arrayed in ample robes. He is reported to have dwelt among the people twenty years, leading them to higher modes of life, opposing human sacrifices, and warning them against war and ravage. Finally he departed to the land of the unknown, as some say, but to the Atlantic ocean according to native tradition, leaving a message with the people that in a future age other men will come from out the sunrise and from over the sea to rule their nation. This legend still existed among the Aztecs when the Spaniards appeared on their coast, and it was their superstitious fear of the bearded strangers who had crossed the sea in winged boats, that enabled the Spaniards to gain a foot-hold in the country and finally to subjugate the race.

Modern Tula was later established as an important Spanish stronghold. It is surrounded by hills, and is a closely built little city, mostly of stone taken presumably from the ruins of the ancient Toltec city. In the plaza are some colossal pillars rudely carved, and at the door of the Cathedral stands a font, also a remnant of Toltec civilization. The Cathedral is a magnificent old edifice, one of the earliest built under Spanish rule, bearing the date of 1553. Surrounding it is a wall, necessary in those days for means of de-

fense. There is at present little evidence of the early importance of Tula. Only a few ruins remain on the neighboring hills. These resemble the Zuñi ruins in Arizona, once a city of the Pueblo Indians, giving rise to the theory that this race is allied to the ancient Toltecs; but another theory, more in harmony with the higher civilization of the Toltecs and better grounded, according to the later investigations in archaeology, is that they builded these cities and dwelt therein for a period of years during their long migratory journey southward, and then abandoned them. Other tribes, the ancestors of the Pueblos of to-day, sweeping westward occupied and adopted them as their homes, and their descendants still construct and live in these houses of many lofts. They are builded one story above another in terraces, with entrances in the roofs which are reached by means of ladders that are drawn in after them, thus affording a secure means of defense against the marauding tribes of their enemies. The lower or ground floor is never occupied by them, but is used as a storage-place for their grains and as stables for their cattle.

It is said to be near Tula that pulque, the national beverage of Mexico, was first discovered, and, according to the Indian historian, Ixtlil-xochtl, it led to the downfall of the Toltec race. Papantzin, one of the nobles of the kingdom, sent his daughter with some of this beverage as a pres-

ent to his monarch, who immediately fell in love with the fair cup-bearer, thus sowing the seeds of discord; and during the reign of their illegitimate son the nation was destroyed.

Onward from Tula we climb to the outer rim of the vale of Mexico, and a scene of surpassing loveliness unrolls before our enchanted vision. Fields of yellow grain, separated by hedges of maguey, stretch out around us, and over against the sky the great fortified buildings of a hacienda stand guard over them. Towering cañti, tropical plants, drooping willows and the graceful branches of the pepper tree, their green heightened by the rich clusters of pink and red berries that mingle with the feathery leaves, deck the hill-sides and fringe the open sluice-ways. The land is dotted with lakes that give it the name of Auahuac (by the water-side), and is indented with numerous sun-kissed valleys green as the emerald. From out the blue vault of heaven appear the snowy peaks of Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl, shadowy forms of mythical beauty in the far-off distance. Several towns and meagre villages, enchantingly foreign, are now and again passed; then the mountains close around us and we enter the *Tajo de Nochistongo*. This celebrated canal was begun by the Spaniards nearly three centuries ago to drain the cup-like valley of Mexico, whose lakes have frequently overflowed and flooded the capital city.

The ancient city was a western Venice, built

on the marshy islands of Lake Tezcucó, with causeways and canals for streets. These, however, have long become solid ground, and the lake has retired several miles from the city; but it is only six feet below its pavements, even at low water, and with every rise the city is deluged. An attempt was made to prevent this overflow by diverting the waters of its tributary, Lake Zumpango, lying twenty-five feet higher at the farther end of the valley, and in 1607 an immense tunnel over four miles long was commenced and completed in a year by the aid of fifteen hundred Indians. Scarcely had the waters been converted to this channel when it was found to be too small; the sides began to crumble and the tunnel soon became choked and ruined. Many efforts were made to enlarge it into an open canal; but meantime a feeling of security against farther trouble from inundations arose, and the work was abandoned.

The lake soon swelled with the gathering waters, and heavy rains occurring the city was flooded for a period of five years, causing the utter destruction of much property, and terrible suffering among the lower classes. The engineer who had advised the closing of the canal was thrown into prison, but was finally released and commenced operations for controlling the waters. The work was continued under various plans for more than a century, being pushed energetically during

the dangerous wet seasons, but neglected in times of drought.

The Nochistongo is now a vast cut into which a river was turned, and the Lake Zumpango was drained. It has never been fully completed, however, according to the first designs, and the other lakes still have no outlets, although they are constantly decreasing in size through evaporation. The cut is about twelve miles long, with high, sloping sides, and rather resembles a cañon than the work of man. It offered an easy entrance to the valley of Mexico when the Central Railway was building, and along the eastern bluff a shelf was cut upon which the track was laid. Over this dizzy, winding way the train glides, offering a good view of this ancient work, one of the most gigantic failures of engineering in the whole world; and then we are full in the Valley of Mexico, and soon at the very city gates.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CITY OF MEXICO.

THE noise and confusion of a great city greet us as our train enters the Central Railway station, and we alight, filled with joy that at last we have reached the haven of our desires, the City of Mexico. The rumble of an out-going train, the clash and clatter of moving baggage, the calls of hackmen, the cries of peddlars and orders of porters make a confusion of sounds and strange tongues as utterly discouraging as the babel of the bricklayers of Babylonian days. However, we were fortunately provided with letters that gained us every attention from the railway officials, who courteously took us in charge, and almost before we knew it we were on our way to pleasant quarters at the Guardiola—smaller, but, as we were advised, far more comfortable than the far-famed Hotel Iturbide. Every arrangement was made for our comfort, and during our whole stay a kindly assistance was given us that added greatly to our pleasure and immeasurably to our facilities for visiting the many places of surpassing interest in and about this historic city. Almost every street

is sacred to the Muse of History, commemorating noted events or distinguished men, from the early days of the Montezumas to the establishment of the Republic.

The Hotel Iturbide was once a palatial residence, the home of the Emperor Iturbide during a period of his short reign. Thus it enjoys the reputation of having been the abode of an emperor, and is accordingly chosen by travelers regardless of its bare floors, hard beds, dismal rooms and many other discomforts. It has an imposing front, with balconies, grotesque gargoyles after the Gothic style, and graceful carvings over the broad entrance leading into a large court surrounded on all sides with galleries supported by pillars. Archways lead into an inner court planted with tropical trees and gay with flowers and dancing fountains. Beyond, another connecting court opens through a side entrance on the street. Galleries extend about the courts from each story, and upon these the rooms open. The floor in the main court is of marble; the stair-ways are of stone, and the floors of the rooms are of brick, and uncovered. The walls are of such exceeding thickness that the interior gives a vault-like chill. This is a disagreeable feature of most of the buildings of the city, and the entire absence of fires is a source of much discomfort to tourists. None of the hotels have public parlors, or reception rooms, as these are not customary in Mexico; but the larger

chambers are provided with broad *portieres* that can be drawn and thus form pleasant private parlors.

The restaurants are conducted separate from the hotels, and generally on the European plan. In the morning a light repast of rolls with coffee or chocolate is served. The regular Mexican breakfast comes about noon, and is a meal as hearty as our dinners, while the meal of the day is a full-course dinner, served from six to eight o'clock in the evening. The entire service of the hotels, as well as of the restaurants, is by men whom we found polite and attentive, always obeying promptly the oriental call of the hand-clap, universally used instead of bells.

Already charmed with the glimpse of the city, gained in the drive from the station, and the little we could see from our windows looking out upon the Guardiola park and the magnificent blue-and-white tile house belonging to the wealthy Escandon estate, we soon sallied forth on foot and entered the great central plaza, or *zocalo*—a bower of beauty, with clustering trees, flowers, a plashing fountain, and gay with the varied life of the centre of a great city. All the streets converge to this square; all the tramways start from here; and on the streets surrounding it are most of the government and municipal buildings, besides the great Cathedral of all Mexico, standing in all its beauty and grandeur at the head of the plaza.

The ancient *tzocalli*, or temple to the fearful war-god of the Aztecs, once stood here. As described by the historian of Cortes' time, Bernald Diaz, it was a terraced pyramid, upon whose summit were sacrificed thousands of human victims every year. During the fearful struggle of the Spanish forces and their allies the city was totally destroyed, and this temple razed to the ground.

A few years later, under the governorship of the successful General, Cortes, a new temple was built on the same site; but this was found to be too small, and the following century it was torn down, and the present magnificent structure was erected, at the enormous expense, in those days, of two million dollars. It is Hispano-Moorish in design, built in the shape of a cross, the front arms of which rise in two noble towers terminating in bell-shaped cupolas, each surmounted by a cross. The façade is heavily carved in graceful, ecclesiastic figures, and the central nave is over-arched with a huge dome. The whole is massively impressive, yet so artistically graceful as to charm one like a fascinating poem. The interior breathes the spirit of a great requiem, beautiful and grand, but intensely sad. The space is so broken into side-chapels by great intersecting arches that reach to the vaulted roof supported by immense stone pillars, and by the ornate choir and altars, that it is the beauty and grandeur rather than the vastness of the interior that impress one. There are



THE CATHEDRAL OF THE CITY OF MEXICO.



fourteen side-chapels, divided from the main body of the church by heavy railings or gates. These are dedicated to the different saints whose relics they contain, or to some illustrious ruler of the past.

In one of these chapels is the tomb of the Emperor Iturbide, as indicated by an inscription on the sarcophagus. Many contain beautiful paintings by the old masters, some of which are genuine Murillos, and one, in another part of the Cathedral, is said to be an original Michael Angelo. The King's chapel at the farther end of the church is a marvel of art, in brass carvings, golden candle-sticks so heavy that no man can lift them, images studded with precious stones, massive crucifixes, and gold chalices, richly embroidered altar-cloths and gorgeous decorations of many designs. From here to the main altar and choir, occupying the centre of the Cathedral, runs a double railing of metals so precious that when the Government offered to replace it with pure silver the offer was declined. The principal light of the church glimmers through the central dome where, floating upon a background of celestial blue, are groups of angels and cherubs seeming ready to burst forth with the *Gloria in Excelsis*, and forming a divine picture expressive of a Raphael's dream of Heaven. The choir and organ-screens are of wood, elegantly carved in heavy bas-relief, with figures of saints and angels,

and sacred texts interwoven with graceful scrolls. At the main altar mass is celebrating and hundreds of burning candles gleam like trembling stars on high.

"The incense lamp
Burns with a struggling light, and a low chant
Swells through the hollow arches of the roof,"

in harmony with the mellow voices of the red-gowned choral boys answering in alternate lines the monotonous intonations of the rich-robed priest within the sanctuary. There are no seats about the altars, nor in the church, and the people, rich and poor together, kneel or sit upon the marble floor. Half hidden by an arch a beautiful señora is kneeling, her face shaded by the graceful mantilla falling almost to the long fringes of her drooping eyelids. From her dainty fingers, bead by bead, a silver rosary is falling, and the whole face and figure seem in rapt devotion. Her companion is older and less absorbed in her prayers. The fire of youth has burned itself out in her deep-set eyes occasionally glancing upon *los Americanos*. There are a few other men and women of the higher class to be seen here, but the worshipers are mostly poor peons, or beggars. Some are on their way to the market with great baskets of vegetables, which they leave here or there on the floor while they murmur a prayer, or kneel before some father-confessor to be absolved from their sins. Many drop in only long

enough to make a genuflection at the main altar, or to mutter a petition to the Virgin, and then pass on their way to their labors or their crimes, as the case may be.

Adjoining the Cathedral is the Sagrario, or parish chapel. It is of a lighter and more fanciful style of architecture. The whole front is a marvel of elaborate carvings, almost barbarous in its massive elegance. Over the high-arched entrance is a statue of the Virgin with the infant Jesus in her arms, and worshipping women at her feet. At a greater height is the figure of Our Saviour, and in other spaces the engraven images of bishops, and saints, and angels. The heavy doors are of wood in bas-relief carvings, and are always open, one service following another from early dawn until the close of day.

Across the plaza to the left is the national palace, the White House of Mexico. It is extremely plain, two stories high, with a frontage of more than six hundred feet, and an entire length of twenty-eight hundred feet. It contains innumerable rooms, the official apartments of the President, the rooms of his ministers and of the military commanders, the treasury rooms and the meteorological department. The barracks are located here, and the soldiers on duty called a halt to our venturesome party and barred our way with crossed muskets, a motion that aided us to comprehend their orders. We obeyed, but

we came again, this time under escort, and with a pass to all the public portions of the building.

The *Salla de Embajadores* on the second floor, facing the plaza, is a magnificent hall five hundred feet long. Here the President meets the ambassadors of the different countries on official business. His chair occupies a platform at one end of the great chamber. Directly opposite, at the farther end in the place of honor, hangs a life-size painting of George Washington, whom the Mexicans reverence almost as much as we. Full-length portraits of past Mexican rulers or heroes decorate the side walls, with candelabra and statues between. The history of the famous men whose pictures comprise this distinguished gallery is strikingly incongruous with their present honorable positions, for almost every hero represented here either fell fighting against his country, or was shot or banished by those in power. It is said that Juarez was the first Mexican ruler who was permitted to die a natural death, and it is thought that even he was poisoned.

The roof of the palace is flat, and provided with a railing, affording a desirable place for observation. The city spreads itself out on all sides as we stand looking down into the plaza below, and then out over the sea of flat roofs, from which stately church-towers rise at many points. The heights of Chapultepec, and the Guadalupe Cathedral on a rising knoll, are plainly visible. Many

touches of green, and many beautiful vistas of far-stretching streets and drive-ways appear, and in the distance are glimpses of suburban villages. Every view closes with dim and purpling mountain rims, and off to the south-east are seen the ever-beautiful forms of the two volcanoes, Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl.

On Sunday morning an added stir is noticeable. The streets of the great city teem with the life of its three hundred thousand souls. The houses of the rich and the huts of the poor alike have emptied themselves into the streets like bees pouring from their hives on the first warm days of spring-time. Constant surprises greet us on every hand, one source of amusement to us being the curious custom that prevails here of giving fanciful and ludicrous names to the different places of business, especially to cheap stores and liquor stands. Every-where may be seen over the doors of such shops Spanish signs signifying "The Angel of Mercy," "The Harbor of Peace," "The Saint's Blessing," "The Happy Retreat," and other alluring names to these places of vice.

In company with a motley throng we make a second visit to the Cathedral, and there listen to a beautiful voluntary on the grand organ, and thence we visit the markets of the city. No worthy picture can be drawn of that mingled scene of misery and easy comfort, of sweet-scented, bright-hued flowers in close contrast with coarse vegetables, dainty

fruits from the tropical lands side by side with the hardier fruits of the temperate climes, meats cooked and uncooked, and merchandise of every description from a spool of thread to mesquite-wood and household furniture.

Gay songsters and brilliant tropical birds in little wooden cages, hardly larger than the birds imprisoned, are here offered for sale by bright-eyed lads; shell-paroquets for *un medio* apiece (six and a quarter cents), dainty canaries and great yellow-and-red-topped parrots, whose talking capacities are vouched for almost too readily to be accredited, are here peddled for a song. Indeed, not only the speech-accomplishments of these birds but also the brilliancy of their plumage cannot be relied upon, for, we are warned, these innocent-appearing venders have the art of dyeing the feathers to seeming perfection, charming the unsuspecting tourist into buying some of these exquisite fledgelings, only to learn in a few weeks that their bright-hued pets begin to lose their fine feathers and become sorry sights indeed.

Whole families gather here for the day's sale, from the never-absent baby in arms, or rather in the folds of its mother's rebosa, to the lord and master in cotton drawers, in serape and sombrero. They seat themselves on a mat, upon which also is piled the entire stock in trade, whatever it may be. Another mat is propped over their heads for an awning, and every individual of the group is either

smoking or munching *dulces*, or the nearest approach to those sweetmeats, a *tlaco's* worth of sugar-cane. The noonday meal of tortillas and rank beans is brought with them, and if trade is good, a few sizzling-hot pieces of refuse meat, sold by venders in the market, are added to sweeten the repast.

In one corner is a band of Aztecs calling out their wares in their own unique dialect, which seems to depend upon the amount of prolongation given to the vowel sounds for variations of meaning. One weird, half-clad woman is holding up by the heels a meagre-looking fowl that she has just dressed, throwing the refuse in a heap by her side, and is calling out in long, monotonous tones something to the effect that "this is the last chance to buy; no more in market," in spite of the fact that directly behind her stands her crate still half-filled with cackling chickens. Verily, here is a civilization older than our own!

One of the most disgusting sights was that of a vender of cheap, raw meats. He wore only a breech-cloth, and upon his back was a great crate filled with meats, from which streams of blood ran down over his bare legs and bespattered his whole body. Turning from this revolting scene we were glad enough to dissipate its remembrance by purchasing a great cluster of roses and masses of fragrant violets, offered for a mere pittance and could have been bought for less. A crowd of boys im-

mediately began to rival one another in soliciting the privilege of carrying them to the hotel, for it is contrary to fashionable custom to carry a package, or even a bouquet, on the street in Mexico. With characteristic American independence however, we dared to brave the custom, and carried the flowers, and even some fruit, back with us, and lost caste accordingly.

The next place of interest to be visited on a Sunday morning is the Alameda, a beautiful park, where a delightful promenade concert is given under its giant trees from eleven until one every Sunday. After attending High Mass in their respective cathedrals the *élite* of the city gather here to meet their friends and listen to the music. There are four orchestras stationed at different points, and they, in turn, flood the air with music bright as the sunshine, while at the same time family parties, and friends, and strangers stroll through the winding walks, exchanging greetings and passing sallies. The men are arrayed in faultless black, as conventional in attire as the Parisian gentleman or the New York dude. The women still wear the mantillas for morning calls and early mass, but for more ceremonious occasions they have unfortunately departed from this most fascinating style of head-dress, and have adopted the Frenchiest of French hats, generally choosing those with gracefully drooping feathers, beneath which, however, the flashing eyes may play havoc as be-

fore. The Mexican ladies universally have dainty hands and feet, the latter encased in fancy slippers or shoes, as attractive as embroidered and stitched kid or satin can make them.

After a hearty breakfast, and a siesta, the fashionable life again makes its appearance in full-dress parade on the grand paseo, or drive-way, leading from the city to Chapultepec, three miles away. The drive is two hundred feet wide, with seven widening circles, each to contain a statue and grass-plot, about which the drive divides. Only three of these circles have been filled as yet: one with an imposing equestrian statue in bronze of Carlos IV., which Humboldt declares to have but one equal in the world, that of Marcus Aurelius, in Rome; another circle is occupied with a noble statue of Christopher Columbus; the third with that of Guatemozin, the last of the Aztec rulers; while the fourth, by the irony of fate, is to contain a bust of his conqueror, Cortes.

Between five and six o'clock in the evening orchestras are stationed along the drive-way, and the great world of fashion sweeps its hundreds of fine equipages and richly caparisoned horses back and forth. Gay cavaliers in full Mexican attire, still the height of fashion for equestrians, dash between the vehicles on their fiery steeds, riding with the native grace of an Arab, bowing compliments, and exchanging with the fair occupants of the carriages, as they whirl by, that

charming, little, Mexican salute that speaks from the fingers. The broad, shaded walks along the way are provided with occasional groups of seats, and these are filled to overflowing with crowds of the poorer classes, their children racing to and fro in full enjoyment. Even the dulce-venders, yea, and the beggars, seem to partake of the holiday gayeties, and to delight in the joyousness of the merry throng, and to drink in the sweet strains of harmony floating on the air. The soul of the meanest Mexican responds with natural impulse to the power of music, to him a word synonymous with happiness. Deprived of music and the bull-fight, the country would soon resume its other great sources of amusement—revolution and riot. Their fiery, southern natures must have the passion for excitement satisfied with music, or drugged with the play, gambling and bull-fights, or—the pronunciamiento.

The fondness for riding and driving is strong. There is a fierce pride, too, among Mexican aristocrats that makes them economize, even to positive suffering in the privacy of their homes, that they may keep up this display in public. As we drove out of the city with this throng of elegance and fashion we could but wonder how many aching hearts were hidden under this semblance of pleasure and serenity. Perhaps their cares and their grievances, however, are left at home, locked within their gates, and only the pleasures of liv-

ing brought to the light of day. Surely thus it seems, as smiles and swift glances flash like electric currents from carriage to caballero. The excitement communicates itself to our cooler natures, and we long for a bow from one of these princely riders. Ah! the wish is gratified. We are recognized by a gentleman we met yesterday, thinking him then only a commonplace Mexican; now he is transformed into a knightly Don Camillo. Both rider and steed are gorgeous, the former in velvet and buckskin, with rich adornings of silver cord and buttons from the broad sombrero to the spurs upon his boots, and about his waist a brilliant-colored scarf. The horse prances under silver-laden trappings and beautiful saddle elaborately stitched and trimmed with gleaming tassels. The saddle-cloth is of fur, with long, sweeping hair reaching almost to the ground. With courtly elegance the rider lifts his sombrero and reins in his champing steed an instant, as he gracefully expresses, with complimentary Mexican politeness, "the exceeding pleasure he feels from his heart" to see us enjoying their favorite drive.

One thing that strikes us particularly is the fact that many of the finest carriages are drawn by cream-colored mules instead of horses; and we are told that it is usual for families, able to afford the luxury, to keep a span of both, as they are devoted to their horses and never use them when out of trim, the mules then supplying their places;

and it is really surprising to see how well they look when properly groomed and handsomely harnessed.

We are now sweeping under double rows of over-arching trees, and nearing the foot of Chapultepec, whose noble groves of moss-draped cypresses have sheltered the heads of Mexico from Montezuma to Diaz. But the sun is fast setting, and the chill air of evening warns us to return, and impatiently we await the morrow, when we are promised a visit to this historic home of many rulers.

CHAPTER XV.

GUADALUPE AND CHAPULTEPEC.

TWO excursions are planned for to-day, the first being a visit to the Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and the early morning finds us on our way to this famous shrine. Business is generally carried on here in the mornings and late in the afternoons, a siesta being taken at noon, and sight-seeing is best conducted in the same manner, a rest being needful during the heat of the day.

In company with a friend, who has kindly offered to be our guide, we take the Guadalupe cars at the plaza and are on our way, listening, as we journey, to the legend connected with the building of the church. It appears that in the early days of Catholicism among the Aztecs an Indian was working upon this mount, when suddenly the Virgin, dark like himself, but arrayed in shining white robes, and standing within a bended rainbow, appeared before him. The Virgin announced herself as the Lady of Guadalupe, friend and patriot hereafter of all Indians coming into the holy fold of the Church. She also told him to go to the Bishop of Mexico and make known to him her appearance,

and inform him of her desire that he build a church there in her honor. The Indian brought the message to the Bishop as directed, who, however, discredited the story. On returning, the Indian was again met by the Virgin, who immediately caused rare and beautiful flowers to spring up at her touch, and these she sent to the Bishop with her former message; but again the Indian was disbelieved. A third time the Virgin appeared to the Indian, and touching his serape, she left her sacred image upon it, and also caused a spring of healing waters to flow from the solid rock by the stamping of her foot. This time the evidence was convincing, and the marveling Bishop added his blessing to the miraculous spring, and ordered the chapel to be built.

This legend was a powerful agent in the hands of the Church for converting the Aztecs. To this day these superstitious creatures come from great distances, on pilgrimages to the sacred shrine, to drink of the healing waters. Churches to the honor of the Patriot of the Indians have been erected throughout the country, but this, the mother-church, is the most noted of them all. The chapel stands on the top of a rocky hill, up whose face winds a steep, rough road, with a walk and railing along its side. We find the ascent, even with this assistance, quite difficult, yet we pass numbers of poor Mexican pilgrims crawling upon their hands and knees up this rugged road, as penance or petition to their

Patron, whose altar they have vowed to visit in this way. One poor fellow has evidently overstimulated his piety by the aid of the much-loved pulque, for here he lies face down on the side of the road, as much dead to all things about him as he will be when in his grave. On the twelfth of December of each year there is a grand pilgrimage to this shrine in honor of the Virgin, this day being supposed to be the anniversary of her traditional appearance. The Indians come from the far interior towns, swelling the number of petitioners in and about the city, and thus form a great penitential procession.

The grand Cathedral of Guadalupe, built after the chapel had become too small for the many worshipers, stands on the brow of the hill. From the terrace in front of its entrance there is a delightful view of the City of Mexico and the surrounding valley. It is a magnificent edifice of stone, with the usual elaborate carvings over the arched portals and on the towers, and the interior decorations are exceedingly rich, the church being very wealthy. The altars are adorned with wonderful combinations of color, carvings, statues and decorations. The chandeliers are of solid gold and the altar-railings of solid silver, for which the Church has refused a full million of dollars.

Going on from the Cathedral we come to a fancy pavilion, the Casa Choncas, a resting-place for pilgrims, its several grotto-like rooms being

encased with a mosaic of colored glass and shells. The work is done by common Mexican laborers who imbed the various pieces in cement, working out the patterns of their own design as they proceed. Sacred subjects, conventional figures, birds and beasts are here represented, one side wall being almost covered with the Mexican emblem, an eagle sitting on a cactus, and holding a snake in its mouth. Altogether it is a curious and unique form of decoration.

Proceeding to the old chapel we meet a group of pilgrims who, we are informed, are pure Aztecs from a village about two hundred miles distant. They know but little Spanish, and among themselves speak Aztec only. Their features are more markedly Indian than those of the mestizos; their complexion is a reddish bronze, their hair black, coarse and straight, the women wearing it in two short, close plaits, while the men wear theirs in straggling locks, all being bare-footed and scantily dressed. In the chapel we find a curious and heterogeneous collection of crutches, and these the faithful believe to have been left here by cripples who have gone away whole, restored by the miraculous power of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Here, too, is a case of miniature arms and legs, in silver, given by those who have had these members cured, in token of their gratitude. There are also numerous crude pictures, representing all forms of accidents, runaways, stage-coach robberies, ship-

wrecks, and murderous attacks—all on the brink of destruction, when the timely intervention of the Virgin saves them from all harm. Over the bluff from the Cathedral is a large stone mast built by a sailor who was caught off the coast of Vera Cruz in a fearful norther, and almost driven upon the rocks, when he made a vow to the Blessed Lady that if she would save him he would erect to her honor a ship of stone on this sacred site. His vessel lived the storm, but either his piety or his purse failed him before the stone ship was completed, and only the mast stands to testify to his good intentions, and to the miracle performed in his behalf.

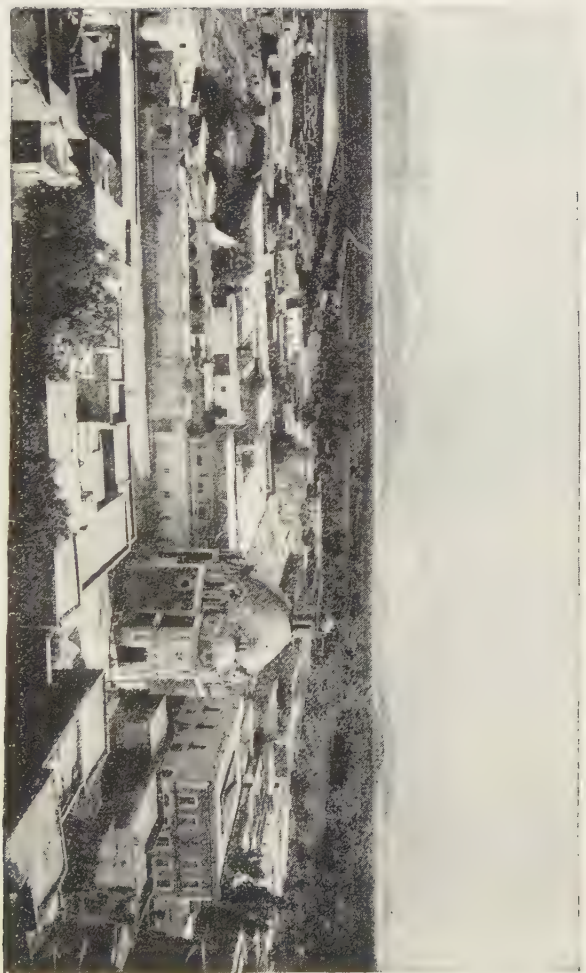
The most sacred possession of the old chapel, and an object of reverential worship by the natives, is the serape of the Indian with a pretentious image of the Virgin stamped upon it. There are other superstitious pictures here and there, and a gaudily trimmed altar withal. In an anteroom to the chapel ribbons are for sale, reputed to be the exact size of the Virgin's head. How this measurement was obtained does not appear, nevertheless they are believed by the masses to be of great efficacy in warding away both danger and disease; and the Indians buy and wear them with the same blind faith with which in former times they wore stone charms of serpents and other repellent animals.

Now we visit the sacred spring, covered with a

well-wrought stone pavilion. The water is strongly mineral, clear and sparkling, and gushes up in a considerable stream. Invalids from all parts of the country come here to drink of the healing fountain, said to be particularly remedial in rheumatism, gout, neuralgia and kindred troubles, provided, always, that the waters be used with proper faith. If, therefore, any one is not cured by these measures, the failure is laid at his own door, and not to the inefficiency of the means. Jars and jars of this miraculous water are carried away daily; and here comes a knot of poor, credulous peons, lugging off a bath-tub filled with it, in the hope of relieving some fellow-sufferer.

Just behind the church is a very old grave-yard containing the tombs of many ancient Spanish heroes. Santa Anna, one of the distinguished presidents of the Republic, lies here. Farther on, a considerable town, Guadalupe Hidalgo, surmounts the hill, and is the home chiefly of Mexican artisans and laborers.

On our return to the city we visited the great church of Santa Domingo, near which stands the famous Inquisition building, where, under the rigid Spanish dominion of the Church, numbers of heretics were put to the torture in her zeal to force them into her fold. This building is now a College of Medicine; and when it was remodeled some of the thick, double walls were torn down, disclosing a ghastly sight and unfolding a horrible tale. In



THE VILLAGE OF GUADALUPE.

them were discovered skeletons of victims who had evidently been sealed up there alive, years ago, and left to die. This Santa Domingo *plazuela* is supposed to be the spot where the Aztecs first commenced the building of their city, and a large stone stands here, representing the legendary story of its origin:

When wandering in the valley they were advised, as the legend reads, to select as a site for their city a spot indicated by an eagle sitting upon a cactus, with a snake in his beak. This was no uncommon sight in a land of eagles, snakes and cacti; but these superstitious people accepted it as a heavenly token, and faithfully and promptly settled where they first saw the phenomenon. This grouping of the eagle, snake and cactus, after the oracular design, is still the coat-of-arms of Mexico, and appears on the national flag, and on the coins of the country.

Early in the afternoon, calling a passing cab, and cabs are of three grades in the City of Mexico, the first carrying a blue flag, the second a red and the third a white flag, and running at the respective rates of one dollar, seventy-five cents, and fifty cents an hour, we are soon on our way to the Castle of Chapultepec. The grand paseo is now not thronged with equipages and dashing horsemen, and there is a better opportunity for noting the beauties of the drive as it sweeps on its level way, broken only by the circular plats. Underneath noble trees we ride,

looking out between them upon as fair a land as the world contains. Off on either side are the stately stone arches of the grand old aqueducts built by the Spaniards to supply the city with water, the one leading from the heights of Chapultepec, the other stretching out to the mountains nine miles in the distance. The dripping archways are moss- and lichen-grown, and often fringed with feathery ferns, their soft green strongly contrasting with the gray stone-work crumbling at intervals with age. Here and there are niches prettily carved, and holding images of the Virgin. One of the aqueducts extends nearly into the heart of the city, the other, now being torn down to be replaced with underground pipes, ends at San Cosme in the outskirts, both terminating in great walled basins encased with stone carved in the perfection of architectural beauty. Emanating from these pretentious endings of the great aqueducts, pipes carry the water to numerous fountains scattered over the city, whence the aguadores distribute it to the houses.

Turning from the pasco we enter the massive iron gates of Chapultepec, under guard of a few sentinels, and we wind on under entwining boughs of gigantic cypress trees, many centuries old, their broad arms heavily draped with long festoons of gray, feathery moss, moving shadow-like in the faint breeze. The mournful stateliness of these monarchs of the forest, and the darkling depths of the wide-spread grove, impress one with a myste-

rious sadness, as if the spirits of the dead rulers, who once loved to wander in this earthly paradise, have imbued it with a peaceful yet intangible sorrow. To our left is Montezuma's tree, the largest in the grove, a giant with a girth of forty-six feet, and whose gnarled and tangled branches tower to a height of one hundred and seventy feet. Under the shade of this mighty cypress, it is said, the Aztec Emperor was accustomed to meet his counselors. His favorite castle occupied the site of the present one, which in various forms has been the palatial home of his conquerors from that day to this. The unfortunate Maximilian and his Queen, with their fine, artistic tastes, better adapted to the indulgence of *les belles arts* than to the mastery of the warring factions of the country they sought to rule, greatly improved and remodeled the castle, adding much to the beauty of its surroundings. It still, however, bears unmistakable evidences of its great antiquity. Montezuma's bath still stands, a charming bit of ruins. A shrubby-grown opening into a deep cave hints of the dark times when this may have been a place of refuge or a chamber for buried treasures. As we climb higher, plats of bright flowers dot the green, and the silvery sheen of a lakelet, bordered with glorious lotus lilies, glistens through the trees, glad with reflected sunshine. Twittering birds—gay touches of moving color—flutter among the branches. And now we wind still higher, until we emerge from the

forest, and are again in the full sunlight. Fountains dance and flowers bloom in varied fragrance and in brilliant hues, both nature and art combining to make this one of the garden spots of the world.

A monument to the brave defenders of their country against American invasion in 1847 stands on the hill, and off below lie the battle-fields of Cherubusco and Contreras, whose bloody scenes the Mexicans have generously forgotten since the treaty of peace signed at Guadalupe Hidalgo. Ascending the broad steps we find ourselves on an extensive stone esplanade, guarded by a sentinel marching up and down in front of the iron gate. As we enter he cries out with a military ring a Spanish call, signifying "Some one enters the gates!" This call is repeated in turn by the sentinels farther on. It is a startling salute to one unprepared for such an announcement.

Chapultepec is the West Point of Mexico, accommodating some three hundred and fifty cadets and officers, coming from the best families of the Republic, and given a course of seven years, ably fitting them for posts of future responsibility. A part of the castle, separate from the Military Academy, has been elegantly refitted for the use of President Diaz. Leading to the two buildings is a massive stair-way branching in either direction into flights, each resting on a natural arch without supports—a beautiful piece of architecture. The top of the castle is suggestive of the

historic Hanging Gardens of Babylon, ornamented as it is with lovely exotic plants and flowers, and tropical trees and delightful shrubbery, among which are bubbling fountains, statues in marble, and figures in bronze to complete the scene. Imported Italian marble forms the stair-way, and in the balconies alternate squares of Puebla and Italian marbles are combined with rich effect.

The crowning glory of all is the magnificent view of the surrounding landscape, so exquisite that one's eyes fill with tears in the intensity of delight that comes from gazing upon the glorious scene. The entire valley lies like a master-picture spread out before us. In the midst is the City of Mexico, its closely clustering roofs dominated by stately towers and richly tiled domes, its proud streets diverging into many tree-embowered avenues and then into dusty roads, like golden tracer-ies crossing the soft and variegated green enamel of the field and meadow. Here and there the sun-touched waters of the lakes gleam in reflected beauty. Tiny villages, miniature copies of the noble city, dot the landscape, every-where outlined on the horizon with a blue and purple trace of distant mountains, except where the two proud peaks raise their royal heads into the blue sky. Popocatepetl, the Smoking Mountain, is still a live volcano, although quiescent, only emitting at times a vapory smoke above its snow-enwrapped crater. Ixtaccihuatl, the Woman in White, derives its name

from the appearance of its accumulated snows, looking like the form of a sleeping maiden lying supine, with her hands crossed upon her breast, her white robes sweeping across the mountain-top, her flowing hair curling off into the azure heavens. The twin peak stands a towering sentinel, like a god, guarding her everlasting sleep, and the silent valley lies at their feet in wondering worship.

According to a beautiful tradition among the Indians: These two volcanoes were once living beings, in the early years of the world, a giant and his spouse. The Supreme Deity became offended at some of their deeds and changed them into these huge mountains. He struck the giantess dead, and there she lies to this day, stretched silent and cold upon her bier, clothed in glistening white. The giant was merely rooted fast to the spot, where he could contemplate his loved companion; and there he was wont to express his indignation and his grief by fiery floods of lava-tears, and by pouring forth volumes of smoke. The affrighted Indians thus recognized him as Tlaloc, the God of Storms, or Popocatapetl, the Hill that Smokes. In his agonies he has upstirred the whole world with his emotions.

As he shakes the celestial locks
Of his immortal head,
All Olympus is shaken.



SACRIFICIAL STONE—COURT-YARD OF MUSEUM.

CHAPTER XVI.

MEXICAN MYTHOLOGY.

“WE shall go to the Museum this morning,” announces our friend and guide, stepping in upon us as we are finishing the modest, early-morning meal customary in Mexico; and soon we are wandering down along the street to the beautiful court of the National Museum. A mine of incalculable wealth here opens to the archæologist, for here are collected and preserved the relics of the oldest civilization of the New World. The wonderful Calendar Stone of the Aztecs is here, together with their Sacrificial Stone, their horrible idols and a few picture-writings—all the mass of relics that fortunately escaped the unsparing hand of the Spanish bishop, Zumarraga. With the iniquity of a zealous bigot, blind to all interests save those of a jealous Church, he made a bonfire of all that he found of the picture-writings portraying the early growth of this people, or giving the accounts of their myths and legends, that would have been of priceless value to students of history and mythology—now buried in impenetrable darkness. It was a sin as unpardonable and a loss almost as great as

the burning of the Alexandrian library by the Saracen invaders, who held that if it contained the doctrines of the Koran it was useless, and if it contained any other it was pernicious, hence in either case it should be destroyed.

Fortunately many of the relics of the Aztecs were of an almost indestructible nature, and still remain to testify to the high civilization and power of this people before the Conquest. The question as to whence came this race, so far above the other North American tribes, is one that has puzzled archæologists from the earliest researches to the present day. "It is the riddle of the Sphinx," says Prescott, "which no Œdipus has yet had the ingenuity to solve."

Current among themselves is the belief that they came down from the North; and the resemblance of many of their myths and religious rites to those of some of the Asiatic tribes would seem to point toward an emanation from that cradle of civilization lying somewhere in central or western Asia. There seems also to be a tinge of Egyptian influence among them, notably in their architectural remains and in some of their hieroglyphic characters, which awakens interest in the theory of the Lost Atlantis. The most likely connection, however, is with the Mongolian tribes, featured somewhat like them, and with a curious similarity in many of their customs and manners, such as the ceremonies of marriage, and the manner of dispos-

ing of the dead by burning the body and then collecting the ashes in a vase, with the peculiar addition in every case of a single precious stone.

There is also a very remarkable analogy in the mechanical forms of their chronological systems. The Mongolians, for example, divided time into cycles of years designated by names of animals in groups taken in regular succession. The Aztecs, likewise, used animal symbols in the same way to indicate their divisions of time, and four of the twelve were the same on both continents; three others differed only in the species found in their respective countries; and the remaining five were of animals whose genus was not common to the two climes.

On the other hand, some scientists hold that the seeming strange anomalies of language, and the total ignorance of many of the most simple and useful arts and sciences of the Orientals, are almost unreconcilable with the belief in Asiatic influence. Reading by the light that evolution has thrown upon the world they would seem to hint toward the possibility of the spontaneous and independent origin and development of the human species in countries far removed from each other, or, at any rate, to place the connection between them at a period too remote to be of material influence. But the subject is of so speculative a nature that in the words of Humboldt, "The general question of the first origin

of the inhabitants of a continent is beyond the limits prescribed to history, perhaps even beyond the realms of philosophy."

The mythology of any country is the natural outgrowth of the desire of thinking beings to understand the beginnings of things, together with the recognition of superhuman powers, and an innate tendency to give these powers visible expression and worship. The theories of the origin of myths are variously explained. Max Müller considers them to be diseases of language arising from the over-richness in synonyms. Thus *Zeus* is traced to a word in Aryan meaning *sky*, used synonymously with all words expressive of the various phenomena of the heavens; and to the sky-god came to be applied, therefore, all the attributes thence suggested. Herbert Spencer considers language to be but one factor in the problem. Recent investigations place it altogether out of the realm of philology, and give myths a natural origin in the early savagery of every people, their closeness to nature making a common brotherhood between them and the animal kingdom, and even the inanimate objects about them thus personified into living, self-conscious beings.

The fundamental laws of nature and the forces beyond their comprehension were explained by mythical causes and by imaginary circumstances acceptable to their undeveloped minds, although seeming ridiculous and oftentimes horrible to our

more intellectual age. Thus arose the stories of how cosmos sprang from chaos; how light came, and darkness; how the heavens were created, and the sea; how the earth was first clothed in verdure, and how animated; and whence came the first man. Thus were born the primitive ideas of a future state, together with thoughts on the where, and the why, and the how of the wondrous phenomena of nature. Bits of early history were interwoven with traditionary lore, and the heroes of the past became the revered gods of the future. Thus the whole frame-work of heathen religion, with its various rites, and beliefs, and manners of worship, grew just as the people grew. As the wild trees of the forest, crowded and warped into gnarled and hideous forms, are of hardier growth than the cultivated trees of the field and garden, so too these people, not yet having attained the period of high mental and moral culture, were addicted to the most horrible, religious rites, and given to the most degrading beliefs and superstitious customs, and at the same time were more devoted to their faith.

Mexican mythology is essentially barbarous and polytheistic. There seems to have been two distinctive opinions of the origin of things, the more advanced acknowledging one Great Spirit, higher than all others, by whom the world was made, the other affirming that there were several equally powerful deities who were instrumental

in creation. That the Sun and the Moon should have been worshiped in this land of resplendent sunshine and glorious moonlight is most natural. It is natural, too, that an eclipse of either of these luminaries should have caused great alarm. The Tlascalans personified the Sun and Moon as husband and wife, and they read in the darkness of an eclipse evidences of quarrels in their household, and which would spread woe and disaster, famine and fever, upon the land, unless amicably settled.

Certain stars were especially sacred, and the beautiful planet Venus was adored as the first light that came into the world. Comets were given names signifying smoking-stars, and their coming presaged evil. The wind was looked upon as a god, or as the Divine Breath. There were gods of waters and gods of the woodlands, gods of the valleys and gods of the mountains, a goddess of goodness and a god of evil, a goddess of sowing and of reaping, goddesses of flowers, of fruit, of beauty and of love, gods of sleep and of dreams, gods of the birds and beasts, and various other nature-spirits to whom wayside-shrines were erected. Fire was held in great reverence, and was kept constantly burning in the temples, one of the most solemn religious ceremonies being its renewal at the close of each cycle of fifty-two years, called the year-binding. All fires were extinguished at this time, and the

people watched with superstitious awe the relighting of the sacred flame by the priests assembled on the hill-top. At the propitious moment the igniting spark was drawn on the breast of the prepared victim. The fire then flashed up, and swift messengers carried torches, lighted by the holy spark, to the various temples and houses.

Another festival of note was that of Tezcatlipoca. One of the handsomest captives of the year was chosen to represent this god. He was sumptuously fared; and for a month he was married to four most beautiful maidens. All were garlanded with fragrant flowers on the day of sacrifice, and were marched through the streets to the temple, where the captive slowly and solemnly mounted the many steps, to be seized by the priests and hurled upon the fatal block, where his heart was cut out and offered to the gods, thus ending his brief reign of pleasure.

Highest and most powerful among the Aztec deities was the dreaded war-god, Huitzilopochtli, whose temple was the most prominent in the ancient city, and whose blood-thirstiness was satiated yearly with the life-blood of thousands of human victims. His image is a great block of basalt, hideously carved into a terrible face with frightful eyes, with multiple hands, and enwrapped in a robe of coiling serpents. After the Conquest and the destruction of the Aztec city the Spaniards buried this horrible monster, in order to turn the people

from its worship; and it was not discovered until some centuries later. It now stands in the Museum, surrounded by numerous other idols, large and small, and all equally shocking and grim.

The famous Aztec Calendar and Sacrificial stones, also exhumed from the plaza, are the most interesting objects of the collection. The Calendar Stone is twelve feet in diameter. Within the first or inner circle is engraved the face of the Sun, in crude representation. The next circle contains, among other things, four parallelograms, indicating the four Deaths of the Sun, or the four great Ages of the World. The third circle contains in animal designs the signs of the days of the month; and in the fourth circle the Mexican cycle of fifty-two years is indicated in conventionally carved squares. Four large triangular figures divide this circle into quadrants, and are variously interpreted as representing the sun's rays, or the four cardinal points of the compass, or the four seasons. In this circle also are four pyramidal figures and eight squares, which, taken with the four large triangular designs, are supposed to indicate the sixteen hours of the Mexican day. Surrounding all is a large, outer zone representing the Aztec heaven, by twenty figures of their sacred flower.

The Sacrificial Stone is an immense round slab, some three feet thick and nine feet in diameter. On the outer rim are groups of warriors, carved to picture the many conquests of the reigning king of



THE AZTEC CALENDAR STONE.

that time. On the upper face is sculptured the image of the Sun. The victim to be offered, as a messenger to the gods, was thrown on this rock and held by four priests, while a fifth, with a huge knife of obsidian, cut open his breast, tore out his still beating heart and offered it in sacrifice to their favorite deity. The body was then given to the captor and his friends, who made with it the feast of victory. On this one stone were sacrificed, it is said, sixty thousands victims in a single year.

Quetzalcoatl, whose name means the plumed serpent, or a serpent with fine feathers, and is applied metaphorically to some ancient ruler revered for his merits and deified, is represented by a cone-shaped monument of a huge, coiled serpent, with a human head as the apex. His most sumptuous temple was at Tula.

The few picture-writings still extant are very curious, the earliest being mere pictures of objects. For instance, Chapultepec, meaning the Hill of the Grasshopper, is represented by a grasshopper sitting on a hill. Wonderful progress was made in this system, as shown by the later writings, in which symbolic characters are used to represent abstract ideas, thus showing the growth of the system and its possibilities. These writings were painted on parchment made of the maguey plant. One choice specimen of picture-writing gives a scanty history of the people, something of their wanderings and of the founding of their city.

Another is thought to tell the old story of the flood, a legend common to almost all nations, with only the snow-capped mountains of Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl rising from out the black waters. The painting and preserving of the picture-writings were by the priesthood, a large class in Mexico. By them, also, were conducted the education of the youth of the nation, and their subsequent training for religious or martial duties. An order of priestesses educated the girls of rank, and trained them in domestic and social affairs. Besides the various duties of sacrifice and the elaborate ceremonies of the temples the priests filled many positions of trust, and offices of state in the empire.

Marriages among the Aztecs were contingent upon the favorable aspect of the horoscopes of the betrothed, as in many of the clans of the East. Offerings were made, by the parents of both parties, to certain old priestesses believed to be skilled in astrology, whose office was to examine into the birth-signs of the couple, and pronounce upon the suitableness of the proposed match. In all probability the favorableness of their report depended, as in the Oracles of ancient Greece, upon the richness of the gifts. The ceremony was performed by the appointed priests, and consisted in knotting together the garments of the pair, who in solemn tread completed seven circles around the sacred fire, throwing incense thereon and listening the

while to the voice of the priest exhorting them to moral living. The contracting parties then entered upon fasting and penance for a period of four days, when the ceremony was complete.

In the main hall of the Museum may be seen the veritable shield of Montezuma the Great, still bearing the moth-eaten remnants of its gorgeous feather-decorations of better days. Cortes sent it to the Emperor Charles of Spain, by whom it was presented to the museum of Vienna, where it remained until it was restored to Mexico by Maximilian. An authenticated picture of Cortes hangs opposite his conquering banner, whose folds once overshadowed the empire of the Montezumas; and here, also, is the pennon under which Hidalgo struck the first blow for liberty from Spanish dominion. Here, too, we see a beautiful portrait of Maximilian, and a table filled with the magnificent silver service used by this short-lived Emperor and his Queen. Their imposing state-coach is also an object of interest. It was presented to Carlotta by Louis Napoleon. The wheels were gilded, and the whole was a mass of rich scarlet and gold, with the royal coat-of-arms elaborately wrought upon the doors and embroidered upon the velvet cushions. The inside was upholstered throughout in heavy white silk; the cords, and fringes, and tassels of the same. When occupied by the royal rulers, and drawn by eight pure-white steeds it must have presented a grand picture; but now it

stands faded and empty, a sad token of fallen power and grandeur.

There is an interesting display of mounted birds and beasts in the department of Natural History; and there are cases of ornaments, amulets, Aztec weapons, vases and clay images, and little gods and big gods without number, from Mexico and Yucatan, and knives of obsidian, a rare volcanic glass found only in Mexico, and extensively used by the Aztecs for sacrificial and other purposes.

When at last the rounds of this great Museum are completed, mentally and physically weary we emerge from the beautiful court-yard where trees, and flowers, and interlacing vines offer us a delightful contrast to the antiquities and monstrosities upon which our eyes have been for hours feasting.

CHAPTER XVII.

MEXICAN HISTORY.

HAVING taken a glance at the mythology of Mexico, a sketch of her history naturally follows here. By the dim light of tradition we have already traced the migratory period of the Mexicans, and their final wanderings into the valley of Anahuac, where they received but scanty welcome from the Nahua peoples already settled there. For years the rude Aztec tribes floated about, often subject to their more powerful neighbors. Under the rule of the Tepanecs, in whose service they aided in the overthrow of the Acolhuas, they began to manifest their ferocity and war-like proclivities. In 1325 they established themselves in a fixed abode and began the building of their city on an island in Lake Tezcuco. Gradually they rose to higher civilization and to greater power, and before the close of the fourteenth century we find the Aztec nation predominant in the valley of Anahuac, and even beyond.

When Montezuma I. was crowned first Emperor of Mexico, in 1438, their sway extended over the conquered peoples southward, even to the Pa-

cific, and eastward to what is now known as the Gulf of Mexico. With a sort of religious fanaticism they pushed their conquering arms, not only to wrest from their enemies territory and tribute, but also to obtain victims for sacrifice to their gods. For another hundred years their power increased and their conquests continued, when suddenly, during the reign of Montezuma II., the Spaniards appeared on their coast. They came at an auspicious moment, when a spirit of rebellion was ripening in the land and the kingdom was weakening under the strain of its protracted wars.

Under the leadership of the intrepid Hernando Cortes, who made retreat impossible by the destruction of his fleet in the harbor, on the plea that the vessels were unseaworthy, this band of invaders, scarcely more than five hundred strong, marched into the interior, bent on conquest and gain. They were given for the most part kindly receptions by the simple tribes along the coast, their superior powers easily inspiring awe and commanding respect. If, on the other hand, they were met with the courage of opposition this was soon subdued by the terrifying effects of their fire-arms, and by the novel appearance of the cavalry, horse-and-man seeming to the affrighted savages, who had never before seen a horse, like some terrible monster, half man and half beast. By crafty promises, and by presents of beads and glass trinkets many dis-

affected tribes were won over to the Spanish cause. Cortes soon claimed their allegiance in the name of Castile and the Cross, overthrew their idols, set up in their stead the image of Jesus and of Mary, and converted whole villages in a day.

Every-where, however, the Spaniards heard tales of a rich and powerful city and kingdom farther in the interior. Reports of the strangers had reached the ears of the Emperor Montezuma, too, whose superstitious fears were greatly aroused by the gloomy predictions of the oracle foretelling their coming. Heralds with inquiries as to their intentions, and bringing presents and propitiatory messages, came to meet the invaders. Cortes returned courtly replies, gifts and compliments, with a request that he might visit, with his followers, the court of Montezuma, as ambassadors of His Majesty, the King of Spain, who desired to offer his compliments and congratulations to his brother, the King of the Aztecs. The answer to these messages, carried by swift runners and porters who took the place of beasts of burden in Mexico, returned in about ten days, with richer gifts of fine feather-work, ornaments in silver and gold, astonishing as well for their wonderful workmanship and beauty as for their value. The Emperor Montezuma extended his courtesies to the Spaniards and to the King of Spain, for whom he professed due respect; but he politely refused to allow them to visit his city, offering as a reason the distance

to the capital and the dangers that beset the way, expressing at the same time his desire that the chief Cortes return immediately to his sovereign with these proofs of his friendship and good-will. Much disappointed by this prohibition, Cortes, nevertheless, dismissed the ambassadors with further professions of respect, although coldly expressing his regrets upon the determination of their royal master.

As a result of these interviews the natives withdrew their kindly aid, and the army experienced many hardships and suffered much from the effects of the malarious regions about them. Their spirits flagged, and discontent and rebellion spread among the troops. The enterprise was fraught with danger, toil and suffering greater than even their courageous natures could endure, and they demanded its abandonment. But to the unflinching will of Cortes, dangers, trials and obstacles only served to fire him to greater exertion, and to more determined resolves. By a bold stroke of policy, while seeming to yield to the opinions of his followers, he inspired them with greater zeal, awakened to fuller force their cupidity, renewed their failing courage and bound them anew to the arduous undertaking. By unusual powers of diplomacy he succeeded in assuring his men that his plans would certainly lead to honor, fame, and to incalculable wealth, and that even then they were on the very threshold of success. So,

indeed, it seemed, for at this time a most gracious message came to the Spaniards from the chief city of the Toltonacs, a powerful tribe, which but a short time before had been conquered by the Mexicans, and whose oppressions they were bitterly resenting.

The news and fame of the wonderful strangers had reached the ears of the Toltonacs and they sent an invitation to the Spaniards to visit their city, at the same time offering to join them in an expedition against the powerful and dreaded Aztecs. This invitation was eagerly welcomed by Cortes, and after learning all possible of the country and of the condition of the empire of the Montezumas, he dismissed the couriers with presents for their lord, and a promise soon to visit his hospitable city. This in time he accomplished, leading his army under guide of the Indians sent to direct them. Crossing first a dreary plain they entered upon a beautiful country, rich in verdure and embowered with tropical foliage and fruit. When at length the Toltonac city was reached, Cortes with his army entered its narrow streets, as much astonished at the evidences of advancement and semi-civilization as were the natives with the wonderful horsemen, glittering helmets and armor and superior abilities of the new-comers. The *caçique* received them with marked respect, and a long conference was held between Cortes and himself, through the medium of interpreters.

The interior dissensions of the country were learned with joy by the Spanish General, who now for the first time conceived the project of subduing the great Aztec empire by dividing it against itself, and by using one half to destroy the other, thus bringing the whole under his subjection. In the interest of this design he kept himself secretly on good terms with the Aztec nobles, whom he encountered in their rounds of tribute-gathering; and at the same time he stirred up their enemies to fresh rebellion.

After a considerable stay among the Toltonacs, Cortes again resumed his march, his army being strengthened by thirteen hundred Indian warriors and a thousand porters, the latter greatly facilitating the travel of the leagues before them by relieving the troops of the wearisome transportation of the baggage and camp equipments. So accustomed were these porters to this work that they easily carried on their backs fifty or sixty pounds from fifteen to twenty miles a day. Several slaves also fell into the hands of the Spaniards, and among them an Indian girl of rank. She became the slave of Cortes, with whom she shared the fatigues of camp-life throughout the campaign. She accepted the Christian religion and was baptized Marina; she readily acquired the Spanish language, and was a true friend and a valuable aid to the Spanish cause.

The Spaniards now proceeded without hin-

drance from the natives, who either met them favorably or deserted their cities and fled. Nature, however, seemed to enter her protest against the invasion. The way became more and more difficult as it left the coast and began to lead up the mountain-sides that guard the great central plateau of Mexico. Moreover, the rainy season having opened, the country was deluged with daily showers, thus rendering travel for man or beast almost impossible. Cortes, nevertheless, constantly encouraged his troops, and kept before their eyes the bright promises of success, and with unfailing perseverance, in spite of fatigues and hardships, and the increasing inclemency of the weather, they held bravely on their way.

When at length they had surmounted the plateau they came upon a considerable city, a stronghold of a powerful ally and vassal of Montezuma. Here they received but cold welcome, and were refused the assistance they greatly needed after their arduous march. They were allowed, however, to pursue their way unmolested, and they even received further presents from the Aztec Emperor, whose vacillating policy, arising from his superstitions and fears of an army that had seemed to come under the direction and continued protection of the gods, refused friendship, yet conciliated peace. He showed on the one hand his wealth of treasure, and on the other his fear of strength to guard it.

Another powerful nation, the Tlascalans, now offered a barrier to their passage through their country. This plucky little republic was the bitter, undying enemy of the Aztecs. By their almost inaccessible position among the mountains, and by their military prowess, courage, and love of freedom to be preserved at any cost, they had retained their independence, although they had been for years sorely pressed and almost continuously besieged. Cortes was desirous of working this enmity to his advantage, and he sent proffers of friendship to Tlascala, with the request that he be allowed to pass through their country; but this stubborn people had no welcome for the intruders. They detained the envoys of Cortes, met his troops with fierce opposition, and marshaling their forces, gave battle after battle with a ferocity and determination that threatened to annihilate the adventurous band of Spaniards and their Toltonac allies. But the superior tactics of the Spaniards, together with the crushing effect of their fire-arms, were weight against tremendous odds; and by desperate struggles they were successively victorious. Again offering their friendship and declaring their intentions against the central power, they were at last cordially received and invited to Tlascala. The bold mountaineers now became as warm friends in peace as they had been hot foes in the field, and their faithful, unflinching allies through all the desperate struggles that followed.

The news of the victory of the Spaniards over this hardy nation was a dread surprise to Montezuma, who had learned with joy of their contests, hoping that the old enemy and the new would annihilate each other. Induced by his fears he now sent warm expressions of amity and rich presents of gold and silver, and even an offering of a yearly tribute to the great King across the waters, whom the Spaniards represented, but still urging excuses against allowing them to enter his capital. In this, however, Cortes was determined, stating as his reason the desire to meet the great Montezuma face to face, to impart to him in person the will of his royal sovereign. While they lingered with their new friends in Tlascala, other messages arrived with the coveted invitation to the capital, urging them not to make any alliance with the treacherous Tlascalans, but to hasten on to the friendly city of Cholula, where a cordial reception should await them. This sudden change of heart created suspicion rather than trust, and the more so from the reputed wily character of the Cholulans, against whom the Tlascalans soon warned the Spaniards, entreating them not to trust themselves in that perfidious city, and urging them to follow another route to the capital. It was the policy of Cortes, however, to present a bold front to both friend and foe, and to seem rather to court danger than to avoid it. He therefore pushed his course to Cholula with a largely increased force,

six thousand of the Tlascalans having united their fortunes with his, and to his cause they clung henceforth to the last.

The beautiful city was a revelation to the Spaniards, who looked down upon it in wonder from the surrounding hills. It was then second only in size and in power to the City of Mexico itself, and was the great centre of their barbarous worship, the holy city of the Aztecs, as Mecca is of the Moham-medans, Jerusalem of the Jews, and Rome of the Catholics. Its numerous towers rose from out the flat roofs of the houses, each a token of reverence to some one of their great gods; while over all was the great *teocalli*, or temple to the God of Air, where, it is said, ten thousand human sacrifices were annually made.

The principal caciques met the Spaniards as they approached the city to conduct them thither. They protested, however, against allowing the Tlascalans to enter its sacred streets, offering in excuse their pretended fear that the long-existing enmity between them would break out in deadly revolt. In consequence the Tlascalans were left encamped without the city, while the Spaniards entered alone, conscious of the dangers that beset them on every hand. Their reception and entertainment were royal, and the friendly mien of the chiefs and priests reassuring; but Cortes never lessened his vigilance, either in camp or on the march. His soldiers, too, were ever on the alert for treachery by

day and by night. Their wariness had served them well many times, and their constant watchfulness of all the movements of their present hosts began to detect signs of danger.

A plot was soon discovered to entangle the Spanish troops in the streets upon their departure, and, when thus separated and encompassed, to utterly destroy them. This was startling news to the daring adventurers, who were thus desperately entrapped where it seemed absolutely impossible for them to escape. A large Aztec force that had gathered in the town pointed unmistakably to Montezuma as the originator of the plot. A bold stroke was necessary, and Cortes laid his plans accordingly. He advised the Cholulans of his intentions to leave early on the following morning, only asking of them safe conduct, and a few hundred porters to aid in the transportation of their baggage. To this request the Cholulans readily assented, the better to further their treacherous designs. Before the dawn Cortes massed his choice troops in the court-yard of his headquarters, strongly defended the entrances, and placed his cannon in such position as to command the adjacent streets. He prepared to meet treachery with treachery with a result that was horrifying, but which, while we condemn in its cruelty, we may not judge of it except in the light of the age in which it occurred and its terrible necessity.

When the army of porters, much larger than

had been requested, and who were also armed, had come into the enclosure, ostensibly for the baggage, the Spaniards opened a tremendous fire upon them, taking them utterly by surprise. The din of the conflict reaching the ears of the Cholulan forces drawn up in ambuscade, they made a rush to rescue their companions; but a raking fire greeted them, and at this moment the Tlascalans, who had been advised by a concerted signal, marched upon the rear and a scene of terrible carnage followed. Hundreds upon hundreds were killed with shot and sword; houses and temples were plundered and burned, and murder and horror stalked abroad until mercy was pleaded for by the chiefs and Aztec nobles, and Cortes with difficulty finally succeeded in drawing off his troops and in quieting the ferocity of his almost uncontrollable Indian aids.

The city was now thoroughly subdued, and the towns about hastened to offer their allegiance to the successful General, whose wrath they dreaded even more than that of the great Montezuma himself, who had hitherto lorded it over the whole country. This mighty monarch trembled on his throne as he now saw the last barrier removed between his city and the unconquerable band of intruders, whose apparently charmed lives seemed proof against both force and stealth. He sent messages of sorrow at the ill-treatment of the Spaniards, and protested his entire innocence of the conspiracy, Cortes accepting it in apparent good faith. Taking

counsel with his nobles, Montezuma resolved to receive these ambassadors, and to pay homage to the King of Spain, of whose existence he was learning to his terrible sorrow. He no longer dared to refuse a welcome to the mighty Cortes.

That this one indomitable spirit, leading a handful of men, could thus enter a vast, unknown country, subdue villages and towns, attract to his cause every disaffected partisan, quiet discontent under the most trying circumstances among his army of adventurers, overcome every obstacle in his path, conquer enemies and convert them into friends, and disseminate over all the country a covert dread of his power, and even cause the lofty lord and prince of the land, Montezuma the Great, to shrink alike from embracing him as friend or grappling with him as foe, impresses one more like a fairy tale than veritable history. The secret lies first in the religious fear arising from the ancient legend of Quetzalcoatl. Bearing in mind the prophecy of the coming of white strangers, who one day would prove conquerors in the land, this legend gave to the Spaniards a miraculous character in the eyes of the natives. They lost their pristine courage when arrayed against a host of apparent demi-gods, who seemed able to command the thunders and lightnings of heaven in their deeds of destruction; while the horses, new to the Mexicans, appeared to sweep down upon them like demons possessed of invincible power,

and with more than human intelligence. It was civilized art against barbarous strength, diplomacy against force, science against numbers, fire-arms against arrows, mind against matter.

The dissensions and distractions in the empire were wielded as powerful weapons against itself. Every means that a master-mind could create or command was directed by a determination that would not yield; by a determination that converted every barrier into added strength; by a determination that climbed by the very steps that obstructed the way, and forged the mighty lever by which the supreme throne of the Montezumas, slumbering for centuries upon a rock, was made to topple and fall forever.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MEXICAN HISTORY.

LEAVING Cholula the Spaniards and their allies finally were fairly on their way to the Aztec capital. The road climbs rapidly up the cordillera that fringes the plateau and leads between the great Twin Mountains, stirring with intense delight the fiery hearts of the Spanish invaders.

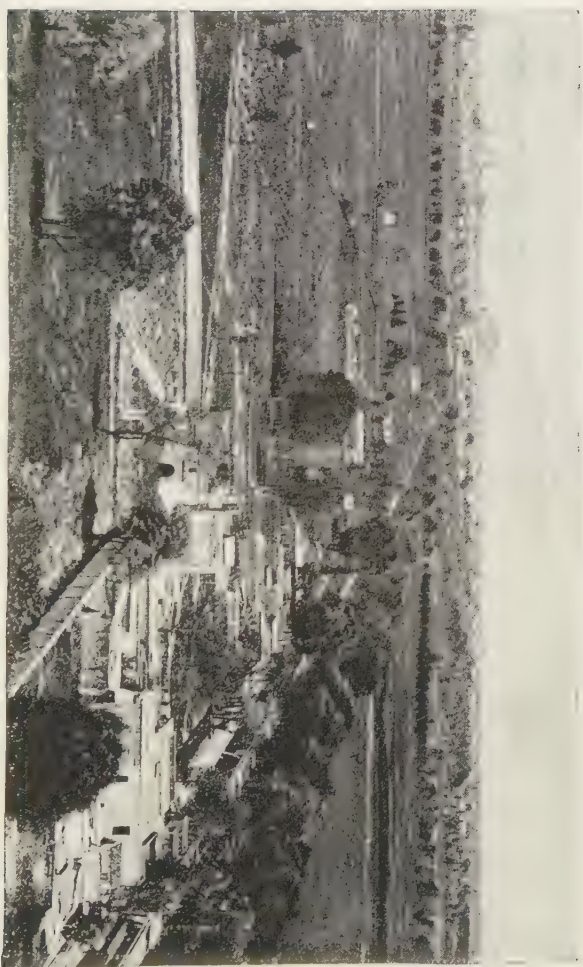
Prescott gives a wondrous story of the ascent of Popocatepetl by Captain Ordaz, who, with a little company of Spaniards, made the arduous journey up its rugged sides to the then steaming and smoking crater, where at frightful hazards he obtained quantities of sulphur to renew the stock of powder necessary for the army. The stupendous feat of surmounting this ice- and snow-encompassed peak has been accomplished by several adventurous travelers in later days, but only with great toil and danger is the trip made. A glorious description of the ascent of this mighty mountain is given in Grant's *Memoirs*, wherein he graphically pictures his trip, taken with his fellows, to the very summit, during the time of the Mexican war.

Passing through this great gate-way Cortes led

his army along the main highway to the City of Mexico, marching with a vigilant eye ever ready for attack. None came, and they traveled on through a country that amazed them with its signs of populous life, its cultivated fields of maize and aloe, and its evidences of a higher civilization than any they had yet seen in the New World. Coming at length to the outer rim, overlooking the fair vale of Anahuac, their amazement was lost in delight. Verdant meadows and spreading forests are interlaced with the shining waters of the lakes. Tiny threads of silver mark the ways of streams and canals, bordered by the brown huts of thriving villages, and in the centre, like a beautiful gem deep sunk in its green setting, lies the renowned city of the Montezumas—Tenochtitlan, the Stone-cactus Place, the beautiful Aztec Venice.

As the Spanish conqueror stood at the head of his little army, gazing upon this scene of enchantment, what feelings of mingled triumph and distrust must have crowded upon his mind:

“There Aztlan stood upon the farther shore,
 Amid the shade of trees its dwellings rose,
 Their level roofs with turrets set around,
 And battlements all burnished white, which shone
 Like silver in the sunshine. I beheld
 The imperial city, her far-circling walls,
 Her garden groves and stately palaces,
 Her temples mountain-size, her thousand roofs;
 And when I saw her might and majesty
 My mind misgave me then.”



THE CITY OF MEXICO FROM CHAPULTEPEC.

Crossing the valley the Spaniards were met by the great Emperor himself, escorted by an armed force, with a gorgeous retinue of nobles and princes. He greeted Cortes with kingly dignity, and formally welcomed him to his capital, which they were now entering by one of the great causeways leading thereto, and from that moment the empire of the Montezumas was doomed. The amazement and admiration of the Spaniards increased with every step as they noted the extensive dikes controlling the waters of the lake, the massive bridges spanning every opening, the well-arranged streets, the grandeur of the city, and, above all, its teeming population and signs of rich, flourishing life. They were conducted to a spacious palace built during the reign of Montezuma's father. So many were its apartments and so vast the court-yards and out-buildings that the entire army, with their numerous Indian allies, found ample shelter therein, and they were abundantly entertained by their Royal Host who, immediately after their arrival, paid Cortes a courtly visit.

The first care of the circumspect Spanish commander was to arrange his camp defenses, and to establish as strict a discipline as though his army were under siege. This accomplished, he proceeded with his officers to present himself at the imperial palace, where Montezuma was living in barbaric splendor, surrounded by voluptuous appointments and regal etiquette truly oriental. His

harem contained as many dusky, dark-eyed beauties as that of any prince of the East, and none ever commanded more abject worship from his subjects. The dissensions and rebellions, that had been to the aid of the Spaniards in the distant portions of the empire, here availed them nothing, for the Emperor's will was law. At a single nod from him the whole city would have arisen as one man. But he had welcomed the strangers into his city as subjects of a royal sovereign who, they led him to believe, was the great Being that had once reigned over their land, now sent to reclaim their vassalage; therefore he treated them with royal munificence.

During the first few weeks of his stay here Cortes studied carefully the city and its environments. He bent every faculty toward ingratiating himself into the good-will of all in power, in fructifying the belief in the divine emanation of the Spaniards as Children of the Sun, in establishing an ascendancy over the mind and character of Montezuma, and in eating into the vital strength of the empire as rust eats into iron. He began early to preach the Christian religion, and to try to turn the people from their pagan beliefs and abominable sacrifices; but in this he was in no way successful, although he obtained permission to implant the cross in the Spanish quarters, and to erect an altar, where Mass was daily solemnized.

Weeks passed, and inaction began to spread

discontent among his troops, warning Cortes that an aggressive movement was necessary, or he must abandon his dream of conquering the empire. By his suave diplomacy and boldness, unparalleled in the annals of history, he succeeded in securing the person of Montezuma and in constraining him to place himself in the hands of the Spaniards, and to change his residence to their own quarters, as a pledge of his good-will. So artfully was this feat accomplished that it appeared to the natives, and almost to the Emperor himself, to be of his own free will, yet, in fact, he had become the prisoner of this little band of foreign troops, and in the very heart of his own city.

Cortes was solicitous to surround Montezuma with the same regal splendor and ceremony as ever, but only the shadow of royalty was left to him. The ground was slowly but surely slipping beneath his feet. Under pressure he formally declared himself a vassal of Spain, and swore allegiance to that power. Later he required from every prince of his kingdom a tribute which, with a liberal addition from the royal treasury—a sum in all sufficient to enrich an empire—he presented to the Spaniards. The next step of Cortes was to obtain, by command of Montezuma, a chamber in the great *teocalli*, or temple, which the invaders converted into a chapel; and side by side with the bloody rites of the Aztecs the Spaniards celebrated the ceremonies of Catholicism.

At this crisis of affairs news came to Cortes of the arrival, off coast, of a Spanish fleet. This greatly alarmed him, as he feared that his jealous, bitter foe, the Governor of Cuba, had sent a force to recall him, and thus rob him of the fruits of all his labors. His suspicions proved to be correct, for no sooner had Narvaez, the commander of the fleet, landed his forces than he declared his intentions to march against Cortes and convey him to Cuba for trial for overreaching his authority. Cortes strove to treat with him by negotiations, sending these by trusty friends, who were instructed, also, to win their way by judicious words and gifts among the soldiers. In this they succeeded; but Narvaez refused all proffers of settlement.

Cortes acted with his usual celerity, knowing the danger of allowing this dissension to weaken his force in the empire. He placed one of his captains in command of the garrison, and taking a portion of his troops he made a rapid, toilsome march across the country. Before the enemy was aware of his approach he had burst into their camp, on a stormy night; and, aided by the surprise, the darkness and the disaffection already engendered by his generous gifts and promises to the troops of Narvaez, he won an easy victory. Placing Narvaez under close arrest, Cortes followed up his success by winning the entire army to his own cause, thus converting a hostile and armed force, greater than his own, into powerful allies, leading

them on by brilliant dreams of conquest and gold, of which but few ever realized even the shadow. They were first to enter upon dark days of sorrow and suffering, and by far the larger number of them ended their days untimely.

Reports of trouble in the city hastened the return of Cortes. There had been a bitter encounter between the Spanish soldiers and the Aztec priests, and the whole city was incensed and in arms. Marching so rapidly that many of his troops fell by the wayside, too worn and weary to travel farther, Cortes reached at length his loyal friends at Tlascala, where he obtained provisions and further aid. Still more alarming messages came from the garrison left in charge of Montezuma—messages conveying the unwelcome news that the troops were closely besieged, that the markets had been shut against them, and that the populace had settled into a stubborn and determined unanimity to resist the invaders.

Eagerly pressing forward, Cortes marched into the city with an increased force of men. He hoped by boldness and diplomacy and by the weight of his presence soon to quell the disturbance; but he had mistaken the temper of the Aztecs, who united the luxuriousness and refinement of the Cholulans with the courage and ferocity of the Tlascalans. Outraged in their rights and insulted in their religion their slow-rising anger had swelled into a tempestuous sea of resentment. Cortes forced his

royal prisoner to address his people and command their submission; but his weakness had won their contempt, and a few lawless marauders had the audacity to answer him even with a shower of stones. The Emperor of all the Aztecs was carried away dishonored, wounded by one of his own people, who a few months before had revered him as a god. The insult rankled deeper than the wound. Montezuma felt himself despised of those by whom he had been worshiped. The arrow of disgrace had entered his soul and from its sting he never rallied. Lingered only a few weeks, refusing to be comforted and spurning medical aid, he died broken-hearted.

In the words of Prescott: "It is not easy to contemplate the fate of Montezuma without feelings of the strongest compassion;—to see him thus borne along the tide of events beyond his power to avert or control; to see him, like some stately tree, the pride of his own Indian forests, towering aloft in the pomp and majesty of its branches, by its very eminence a mark for the thunderbolt, the first victim of the tempest which was to sweep over its native hills."

The fury of the populace, no longer held in check by the presence of the once-loved Montezuma in the camp of the enemy, now burst in full force upon the Spanish troops. On the death of Montezuma his brother, Cuitlahua, became Emperor of Mexico, and he conducted the Aztec forces with a

vigor inspired by his loyal patriotism and his bitter detestation of the white man. The garrison was kept under constant and furious assault through his generalship. A galling fire of arrows and stones was continuously showered upon them. Every sortie of horse or volley of artillery was met with unflinching courage. Hordes of Indians, full of vim and ripe for the conflict, swarmed to the revenge of their comrades, replaced the slain, closed the broken ranks and savagely fought for their native city, and for their cherished belief in the gods of their ancestors. The streets bristled with warriors, and every house was a fortress, every roof a place of attack.

The Spaniards made a successful assault on the temple and by almost superhuman efforts gained possession of this important point, thus enabling them to defend their quarters. But the tide of opposition was set full against them, and was no more to be stayed than the tides of the ocean. They must evacuate the city or be overwhelmed by the flood. But the great Island City was like a vast moated castle, with ports-cullis down and draw-bridges in, and every avenue of escape guarded.

Making the best distribution possible of his army, Cortes attempted under cover of the darkness to make good his retreat. It was a perilous, desperate undertaking, but to remain longer would result in utter annihilation. Silently his men filed

through the streets, vainly hoping that a people unused to night attacks would not discover their attempt at flight until they had escaped from the jaws of death open to devour them. But the Aztecs had learned sufficient of European warfare to be on their guard both night and day. Their sentinels sounded the alarm, and before the van-guard had reached the temporary bridge thrown across the dike an armed force was upon them. Crowded as they were on the long, narrow causeway, their lines offered direful targets for the arrows and stones of the enemy. By thousands the Aztecs came upon them with the fury of wild beasts, firing in showers their death-dealing missiles, grappling with them from swarms of canoes and dragging them into the lake, where they were drowned, borne down by countless enemies or by the weight of their gold and their weapons, or were permitted to live only for the more horrible death by sacrifice.

Bravely, too, the Spaniards fought for their lives, making what advance they could by staggering over their fallen comrades with the struggling strength of desperation. Reaching at length solid ground, where fortunately the enemy did not follow, Cortes attempted to bring his remaining troops into something like martial order. More than two-thirds of the brilliant army, with which but a few months before he had entered the city, had been swept away. Many of this sad remnant

were hurt to the death, their tattered and blood-stained garments showing gaping flesh-wounds; and all were, without exception, crushed and bruised, dismantled and dripping with the bloody waters of the lake. Their pitiable plight wrung their leader's heart, with anguish, and sitting under the gnarled cypress, which still marks the memorable spot, he wept in bitter tears for the fearful disaster that had befallen them. This spot is to this day commemorated as the *noche triste*, or night of sorrow. But desperate as was their condition they must press on toward Tlascala, their only hope of safety. The soul of the great General rose to meet even this terrible crisis, and from the jaws of defeat he still hoped to snatch the crown of victory. It was now the time to act, and not to mourn.

News of his disaster had spread over the whole country. Defeat had robbed the Spaniards of their superhuman character, and they no longer struck awe into the hearts of the natives now harrassing them on every hand. Gaining possession of a temple but poorly defended, they halted for the recuperation they sorely needed; but they dared not linger long, and on the second day they again resumed their weary way. After a week of slow, difficult progress their spirits began to revive, even in spite of their jaded limbs, in the hope that they would soon be in the country of their friends, with no further fear of collision with their desperate foe.

Almost joyfully they toiled up the steep hillsides that guard the verdant valley of Otumba, when suddenly there came from their out-guards the chilling report that a great army of their enemy was awaiting them over the ridge. This direful information was soon verified, for, marching a little higher, there burst upon their astonished gaze a savage host that filled the entire valley like one tumultuous sea. A moment of dread and awful suspense filled every heart, and then their brave leader's voice rang out with words of cheer, as never before, reminding his men of their many victories in times past, demonstrating to them the vast superiority of science over numbers, urging them to remember that the strength of heaven was on their side to bless and to aid, convincing them that retreat was impossible, showing them that Mexico and destruction lay in their rear, and rallying them into the belief that the only possible way of escape led forward, and over the bodies of the opposing foe. So, with the fury that is born of despair, they prepared to cut their course through the savage throng, firmly resolved to win, or, if must be, bravely to fall.

“Desperate the die—such as they only cast
Who venture for a world, and stake their last.”

Forming in battle array they descend into the valley, sounding the Spanish war-cry signifying: “Santiago, and at them!” They are answered by

the fierce and almost fiendish shrieks of the Aztec horde thirsting for the hot blood of the Spaniards. With a terrific charge the little Castilian band breaks through the front ranks of the enemy, trampling them down with their war-steeds and piercing them through with sword and spear. Then the vast multitude of warriors surges back, fiercely closing with them on every side, and the conflict rages hard and long. Boldly the intrepid Spaniards hold their own, and more, fighting furiously and dealing death at every blow, but the tremendous odds begin to tell against them. Total annihilation presses close upon the heels of the meagre company, when the eagle-eye of Cortes, glancing anxiously over the field for some vantage-ground, sees at no great distance the chief of the horde, readily distinguished by his gorgeous attire and stately retinue.

Calling about him a few of his brave cavaliers, Cortes cuts precipitately into the ranks of his enemy, mowing down all before him. He darts like a flash into the princely *cortège*, overcomes the great chief and strikes down many of his attendants before the danger can be apprehended. The great Aztec force is now terror-stricken and a frightful panic ensues. They flee as before the whirlwind, trampling over one another and often cutting down their friends in their blind fear of the foe, by whom they are hotly pursued and with frightful slaughter. The Spanish troops strike for booty, while the Tlascalans sate their souls in

carnage with the fury of long-rankling revenge. The victory was brilliant and decisive, and considering the disparity of numbers and the enfeebled condition of his army perhaps it was the most wonderful of all Cortes' achievements in the land. The Aztecs made no attempt to rally, and the march continued without further dispute, and in a few days the borders of the Tlascalan republic were reached. The Indians welcomed the sight of their native land with transports of joy; while the Spaniards, on the contrary, appreciating the weakness of their position, dreaded as much as they longed to reach the end of their journey. Even the valiant Cortes was gloomy with apprehensions, although he tried to uphold the courage of his men with hopeful assurances. The Tlascalans had been their true and intrepid friends through all. Not the slightest sign of defection had been manifest among them, now returning a broken band—a mere handful of the brilliant company that had marched forth from their mountain home, all-confident in their lordly leaders.

The uncertainty of the welcome the Spaniards might find awaiting them, now shorn of their glory and strength, and bringing only sorrow and defeat, was a source of deepest anxiety to all. Well they knew that if this last refuge were denied them, utter annihilation would be their fate; while with this tribe as a rallying centre the ambitious Cortes could still hope to effect his schemes of conquest.

Therefore they lingered upon the frontier until news of their return had reached the Tlascalán capital; when to their unutterable joy came messages of sympathy, together with a cordial invitation to the city, assuring them of whatever aid and comfort its crude conveniences could afford. Cortes lost no time in accepting this welcome proffer and soon his army was established again in friendly quarters.

The Council Chamber had not been without advice against this amicable reception, for the young chief, who had bitterly opposed the Spaniards on their first appearance, desired to meet them again in the field and measure his prowess with theirs. Such powerful friends, he argued, would soon prove more dangerous to freedom than their most powerful foes. This, indeed, proved to be the word of prophecy; but he was alone in his far-sighted fears, and other counsel prevailed. An embassy from the Aztecs came in vain to the Tlascaláns to tempt them from their alliance, offering to forget their long-existing feuds and urging them to join in a mutual resistance of their common enemy. These overtures, showing the weakness of their once proud foe, served rather to strengthen their union with the Spaniards, who even in defeat had thus inspired the mighty Aztecs to sue for aid.

CHAPTER XIX.

MEXICAN HISTORY.

RECOVERING from a severe illness, consequent upon the terrible trials and disasters he had undergone, Cortes again began to lay his plans for conquering the empire. Discouragement, however, had spread among his troops, and they requested, in a formal petition, the abandonment of the enterprise that had already nearly brought them to destruction, and had left them utterly unable to cope with the myriads arrayed against them. Cortes, nevertheless, took a resolute stand, and demanded to know if, indeed, the brave soldiers whom he had led to victory, times without number, fighting for Castile and the Cross, now really desired to desert their leader and their sacred trust—now, after having learned of the treasures and glory awaiting them at the Aztec capital. His words were successful in reviving the enthusiasm of his men, and in smothering the rising rebellion.

Active operations were soon begun against the surrounding tribes that had turned with the tide to their old allegiance, and had sought to prove their

zeal by destroying every Spaniard that came within their reach. Cortes punished them without mercy in order to re-inspire in the land a dread of his power. As an example to other hostile tribes the village of the Tepeanacs, where a small body of Spaniards, on their way to the important colony of Villa Rica on the coast, had been seized and sacrificed, was razed to the ground and the inhabitants branded and given into slavery.

At this juncture the Spanish troops received able reinforcements from a fleet sent over by the Governor of Cuba to the aid of Narvaez, whom he supposed to be in command of the country. Under this supposition the Cubans were allowed to land, according to the instructions of Cortes, and by brilliant accounts of the country and displays of the coveted gold, they were induced to enter the service of the very man they had been sent to humble. Other vessels of explorers yielded their quota of men to the expedition, and hardy adventurers, here and there, seeking spoil under whatever banner, added their strength to the enterprise and supplied the dismantled army with fire-arms greatly needed to take the place of those lost in the disastrous flight from the Aztec capital. Thus, by well-directed coercion and masterly strategy, Cortes succeeded in reinforcing his army, for his great name proved to be a mighty magnet that drew to his cause all who came within the magic circle of its power.

With an army now strengthened to almost a thousand men, supplied with a few heavy guns and small pieces of artillery, and with a noble contingent of allies, some fifty thousand strong, Cortes, early in 1521, less than a year after his desperate retreat, again marched into the valley of Mexico. With arms and armors burnished, with banners waving and cross uplifted in the ranks of the Christians, and with savage warriors decorated with bright plumes and flying the gaudy appendages in equal triumph, they pressed onward for victory, making a display as brilliant as it was imposing. Every province and town through which Cortes passed, that refused a ready submission, was forthwith reduced by force of arms. His plan of operations required a clear sphere of action and a friendly or subdued country in his rear from which to draw the supplies for his great army. This task was almost inconceivable, the greater as he neared the city, requiring constant watchfulness and activity and frequent counter-marches, for often a town, reduced to subjection by the passing army, would rise again and again until utterly demolished. The terrible lesson of the Night of Sorrow had warned him, too, against trusting to the treacherous causeways for entrance to the city. Under his instructions a number of brigantines had been built in sections and carried on the backs of Indian porters, some twenty leagues to the lake, with cordings, sails, and other para-

phernalia, ready for quick erection and service—a feat fairly incredible and without parallel in history.

In May, 1521, the boats were launched amid great rejoicings, and the same winds that filled their sails wafted across the lake the triumphant strains of their *Te Deum*. The city was invested on all sides, by land and water, and the siege was begun. The land forces were in three divisions, under command of Alvarado, Sandoval and Olid, while Cortes himself took charge of the fleet.

The scourge of small-pox, introduced by the coming of the white man, had swept over the country, just previous to this period, sparing neither high nor low, depopulating whole towns, and even visiting the imperial palace, striking down the Emperor, Cuitlahua, after a reign of only four months. Guatemozin, a nephew of Montezuma, young, determined, and blazing with patriotic fire, had succeeded to the tottering throne, and was exerting all his energies and all the force of the empire to stay its fall. From the moment of his accession he endeavored to unite his kingdom to meet the gathering storm; but while the near provinces yielded their allegiance, many of the more distant stood aloof, or took advantage of the situation to throw off the heavy burdens under which their backs had long been bended, little dreaming that the iron yoke of the Spaniards, whom they were thus aiding, would soon drag their necks to the very ground.

In June the bitter struggle of the Spaniards to conquer Mexico began with a combined attack by the three divisions in three different quarters of the city, and was thenceforth fought to the death. They penetrated some distance into the streets, filling with stones and rubbish the breaches in the causeways from which the natives had torn the bridges, ably defending these points by ramparts thrown up on the inner shore. In destroying these defenses the brigantines rendered essential service by enfilading the ranks of the enemy and raking them with scorching fire. In the shallower canals, however, the fleet could not go, and the savage hordes took firmer stand. Darkening the air with their arrowy sleet, and showering stones and burning brands from every roof, they compelled the assailants, after a fierce conflict, to retire, but not until a number of buildings had been burned. As a consequence of this partial victory supplies and reinforcements from surrounding tribes rolled into the Spanish camps, swelling their allied forces to nearly two hundred thousand men.

Without giving the Mexicans time, as they supposed, to recover from the assault, the Spaniards again marched against the city, when to their dismay they found the passages cleared and the defenses rebuilt, and all the labor of the last attack had to be re-wrought. The rage of the Aztecs seemed only to have gained in intensity, and when their enemies penetrated to the plaza they fought

them back with the fury of wild beasts. From the house-tops they hurled down their murderous missiles with such force as to almost rout the invaders, and Cortes found it necessary, in order to make farther advance, to apply the torch to the magnificent palace that had sheltered his own army during their former visit to the capital. Memories of the desperate siege sustained here, and of its bitter termination in the horrors of Noche Triste, gave a furious zest to the firing of this magnificent structure. Many other grand buildings also were burned, notably the House of Birds, a fanciful edifice of great cost in which were confined all the plumed varieties of the country. Night came, however, without any decisive result, and warned the Spaniards to retreat. Struggle after struggle continued, each victory of to-day requiring to be won again on the morrow. Day after day the Spaniards made their terrible inroads into the capital to be again and again driven back with a stubbornness and desperate determination equalled only by the heroes of Thermopylæ.

Neither by day nor by night was there any rest nor scarcely a cessation of hostilities, for the Aztecs, contrary to their usual custom, made frequent attacks under cover of the darkness, striving to find the weary Spaniards off their guard. On water as well as on land bloody battles raged in open contests, while the wily stratagems, so common to savagery, frequently made the water crimson with

Spanish blood, in spite of their constant watchfulness. Pikes were driven beneath the waters of the lake, by the natives, to capsize the boats; ambuscades were laid on land to ensnare the troops, and false retreats were made to out-flank the enemy. To the sufferings of the field, too, were added the horrors of sacrifice, for every captive taken by the Mexicans was offered to the gods in conciliation of their favor, and then hurled from the steps of the temple to be prepared and feasted upon by the savage captors to satisfy their vicious appetites. With every varying result the tides of tribal allegiance ebbed and flowed, striving ever to be on the winning side, flooding the ranks of the Spaniards after every victory of theirs only to revolt with imprecations and indignities after defeat. Thus for many weary weeks the bloody siege continued, seeming no nearer a close than at the first engagement.

At every opportunity for communication Cortes sent conciliatory messages to the Emperor, Guatemozin, offering honorable terms of capitulation, promising to forget the past, promising to respect the liberties of his people and to confirm his authority, if he would but receive him peacefully and return to the allegiance that Montezuma had acknowledged to the sovereign lord and emperor of Spain. Such words availed nothing with Guatemozin, who recognized no authority higher than his own, except that of the gods. He had no faith

in the promises of the men through whose treachery the noble but weak Montezuma had fallen, and he answered such messages only with a rout more blood-thirsty than the last.

Portions of the city were frequently taken, and at one time nearly three-fourths of it was reduced and held by the Spanish arms, but only to lose their advantage, for the intricacies of the narrow, close-built streets and the intersecting canals gave all the odds to the natives, and rendered almost impossible the tactics of European warfare. The invading army became impatient from suffering and delay, and Alderete, the royal treasurer, advised a bold, concerted action by which the troops might penetrate into the heart of the city and entrench themselves in the great market-place, where far more comfortable quarters could be arranged than their present camp afforded. To this plan Cortes finally assented, finding it to be the wish of the Council, but he commanded exceeding caution in filling every breach in the causeways as they advanced, and in preserving unbroken passage-ways to the rear throughout the attack. In the enthusiasm of the sally these precautions were overlooked in Alderete's division. This failure very nearly brought destruction upon the whole army.

The Aztecs retreated before the invaders in apparent confusion, thus drawing them into their very midst, when suddenly they faced about, and their pursuers found themselves surrounded on all sides

by hordes of savage troops, and fierce the conflict was waged. The assailants were driven back in wild disorder at length, and at the neglected chasm none could escape except by swimming and clambering up the opposite bank of the canal in the very face of swarms of enemies who there cut them down mercilessly, while others were speared to the death from canoes, or dragged wounded into them for the more terrible punishment of the future. Those of the rear guards were more fortunate in passing the breach, staggering and clambering across the canal on the ghastly bridge formed by the bodies of their fallen comrades. Cortes himself was severely wounded, and escaped capture or death only through the heroic exertions of his immediate aids, one of whom was killed on the spot and another taken alive to suffer the atrocious tortures of sacrifice. Many other Spaniards and great numbers of their allies met a similar fate, and the mortality, especially among the latter, was frightful, while comparatively few escaped unwounded.

Festivities in the Mexican city followed, and so many were the victims offered to the gods that the priests declared their divinities were at last appeased, and they here made the fatal mistake of promising that in eight days the city would be delivered from the hands of the enemy. Heads and limbs of captured Spaniards were sent in numbers to revolting tribes with the warning: "Thus it shall be soon with all the enemies of Mexico!"

Although these prophecies were scoffed at by the Spaniards, their superstitious allies gave them such credence that company after company deserted, leaving the representatives of Castile and the Cross almost without native support. The eight days passed, however, without any manifestation from the gods, and mourning and distrust took the place of joy and faith in the Aztec city, now doomed to the darkness of despair. The deserting tribes returned by thousands to Spanish allegiance, burning to wreak their vengeance on the priests of false promises, for their arrogant deception.

Cortes now began upon another plan of action. After making a last vain effort to induce the staunch, young Emperor to peacefully become his vassal, he determined upon demolishing every building as he advanced, filling every channel to the level, converting the water courses into dry land, burning everything that would burn, tearing down, stone by stone, everything that would not burn, and taking no steps forward until he had left utter desolation at his back. The great General undertook this plan of operations only as a sorrowful necessity, and as a last resort, in the accomplishment of his object, deeply regretting the unfortunate destruction of this fair Queen of the Valley, enthusiastically described in his dispatches as "the most beautiful city of the world."

Desperate and persistent, the Aztecs fought against the dire ruin of their beloved home, and

against the overthrow of their empire; but each day found them harder pressed and nearer the end of their glory. Famine and disease, with all their attendant evils, came to their midst, and against which they were more powerless than against their foes at the gates. The stores of provisions, laid in for the siege, were exhausted. A handful of grain brought its weight in gold, until there was no more to be bought; and there was scarcely anything to drink except the brackish waters of the lake. The wretched inhabitants sustained life by chewing roots and barks of trees, by eating a kind of scum scraped from the lake, by devouring any vile reptile, and occasionally feasting upon the bodies of their enemies. Still in this extremity their spirits remained unbroken, and there was no thought of yielding to the persistent enemy offering them peace only as the price of submission. The horrors and sufferings of the closing days of the siege beggar description. The starved and emaciated Aztec warriors are slain by thousands, and die unconquered. The days are filled with carnage and destruction, and the nights are lurid with devouring flames.

At length Alvarado's division sees before it the long-coveted market-place, still stubbornly defended by the enemy. Anxious to be first to win this important post he pushes on his men with such vim and vigor that he drives everything before him and heaps the ground with the wounded and the

slain. The natives are overcome, and the square is his, if he can but wrench from them the commanding towers of the temple. On rush his men to this spot sacred to the Aztecs. Time after time they essay to mount the steps, and are hurled back with great loss. At last the summit is reached and the Spaniards dash the base idols from their bloody altars. This act of sacrilege to the revered gods of their forefathers so enrages the Aztecs that their arms seem imbued with double energy and power, and they rush again upon their assailants with a fury that carries everything before it, and compels a retreat into the outskirts of the city. This victory shines as a last gleam of hope on this wretched people. The priests commit a second fatal mistake, by declaring that in three days their gods will deliver the city from its ravishers and bring destruction as a whirlwind upon them; and once more the natives believe.

"O the lover may
Distrust that look that steals his soul away;
The babe may cease to think that it can play
With heaven's rainbow; alchemists may doubt
The shining gold their crucibles give out;
But Faith, fanatic Faith, once wedded fast
To some dear falsehood, hugs it to the last."

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THE three days pass to find the despairing multitude, now penned up in the sad remnant of their long-loved home, only more wretched than before. After recuperation, Alvarado, nothing daunted by his defeat, returns to renew the attack, this time with success. Cortes with his division arrives at the plaza from his side of the city simultaneously with Alvarado, and together they mount the steps of the temple and view the sad scene of ruin. Seven-eighths of the town is now subdued. The streets reek with the blood of the slain, whose bodies lie in such heaps that the air is stifling with the noxious odors of putrefaction. The natives are dying, men, women and children, by hundreds, of starvation and fell disease. Struck with horror at the ghastly sight Cortes again sends to Guatemozin asking him to surrender and save his people from further suffering and woe; and this is the Emperor's reply: "My people elect to die; and will trust themselves neither to the men who commit, nor to the God who permits, such atrocities!"

To conquer the Aztecs was impossible except

by grinding them to dust. Sending Alvarado to one quarter, Cortes marches against another, and the thundering cloud of war breaks in its final fury. The wretched natives court rather than shun death as a blessed deliverance from their sufferings, and the battle rages until it becomes a massacre, for the Indian allies show no mercy, and spare neither innocence, infancy nor age. Thousands fall in such masses as to form a barrier between the lines, and still the natives will not yield. The houses are pillaged and almost totally destroyed. "Such cruelty," says Cortes, throwing the blame on his Indian troops, "was never before witnessed."

A few days later the Emperor is captured while trying to escape by boat from the city. When led before his Spanish conqueror his graceful and dignified bearing commands the respect due to fallen majesty. He pleads that the slaughter of his people be stopped and that they be allowed to escape into the green fields surrounding their ruined city. For himself he but asks for a speedy death through the dagger hanging by the side of his victor. Cortes, however, re-assures him of his protection and courtesy, a promise treacherously forgotten in the near future. With the capture of Guatemozin all resistance ceases, and the empire of the Montezumas has fallen.

Peace being declared, the stricken people are allowed the boon asked for them by their deposed ruler, and a wretched and sorrowful procession

streams slowly out from the plague-smitten city, across the wasted causeways into the adjacent fields, seeking for food where they had once commanded slaves. For three months the siege has lasted, closing with victory for the mighty Cortes on the thirteenth of August, 1521. The loss among the Spaniards has been inconsiderable, although thousands of their allies have been slain. Of the Aztecs at least one hundred thousand have fallen in battle, besides the great numbers who have died from famine and disease.

When the city had been emptied of the remnant of its inhabitants the Spaniards commenced its purification by burying the decaying bodies, and by building great fires along its ruined streets. Among the troops the time was given up to feasting and rejoicing. Having no farther need of the faithful vassals who had aided the invader in his work of spoliation Cortes now dismissed them to their respective countries with slight plunder, but with magnificent promises of future glory. With these fair visions and with the complete annihilation of their ancient enemy they were content, little suspecting that the visions were soon to fade into nothingness, and their new friend become a taskmaster incomparably harder than the last.

The Spanish soldiers were not so easily satisfied. Gold and silver was the reward they coveted, and the treasure obtained was far less than had been expected. After setting aside the royal fifth to be

sent to the Crown, and the fifth for the commander as his assigned sum, besides the large divisions allowed to the under officers and cavalrymen, the share falling to the uncommissioned soldiers was far inadequate to the value of their services through their long and faithful campaign of toil and suffering. Some refused to receive so small a recompense, and there was disappointment and rebellion among them all. They declared that Guatemozin had concealed the treasure and they clamored for his delivery into their hands, that he might be tortured into revealing its hiding-place. When Cortes refused to comply with this awful request his soldiers insinuated distrust in his motives and implied an intention on his part of gaining and appropriating the treasure to his own use. Stung by such accusations Cortes weakly allowed Guatemozin to be taken to the torture with some of his companions of past power. Their feet, after being rubbed with oil to prevent the too rapid charring of the flesh, were roasted before a slow fire, causing such intense agonies that one died from exhaustion. Although Guatemozin confessed to having thrown some gold in the lake, nothing of much value was found except an image of the sun in solid gold, discovered in a deep pond in the Emperor's garden.

With the fall of the empire and capital city of the Aztecs fell also the entire Mexican nation. Almost all of the tribes, except those in far distant provinces, sent in their ready allegiance, and the

few holding aloof were soon reduced to submission by the Spanish arms. It soon became necessary to establish a worthy centre to this great territory, and Cortes determined to build a new city upon the site of the old. Rapidly the work progressed by the hands of the very people who had aided in tearing it down, thus fulfilling the prophecy of the Aztecs, who had taunted their Indian enemies with this cry throughout the siege: "Yours will be the labor of building up what you tear down, for if we are victorious we will scourge you to this work; and if the Spaniards are successful they will make you their slaves."

The plan of the new city was much the same as that of the old, with the Spanish mansions and municipal buildings substantially erected of stone, and occupying the same locations as those stately palaces of the past *régime*, now forever fallen. The causeways were enlarged and extended, several being added to the original number.

With his brilliant dreams of conquest fully realized, Cortes fitted out his expedition to the Spanish Emperor, sending, with the lengthy dispatches descriptive of every important step of the enterprise, the great mass of treasure reserved as a key to imperial favor. The greater part of this prize was unfortunately captured off the coast of France, and the great mass of gems and gold so hard-wrested from the conquered Aztecs by Spanish warriors thus went to enrich the throne of a

rival court. The dispatches, however, were saved from the wreck, and the wonderful success of the adventurous General found him favor in spite of the machinations of his enemies; and in October, 1522, the Emperor signed the commission of Cortes as Captain General and Chief Justice of New Spain.

The first government was essentially military, with Cortes as chief executive. There was also a Chamber of Deputies with powers judiciary, and with authority over the distribution of land to the colonists. By the iniquitous apportionment of a certain number of the natives to every acre of land granted, the once free inhabitants were practically reduced to slavery, and compelled to inhuman toil in the mines and incessant labor in the fields for the benefit of those whom they had aided to victory.

In 1524, while engaged in an expedition against the rebellious people of Honduras, Cortes committed the most atrocious act of his whole life. He had taken Guatemozin with him on the campaign to prevent any uprising in favor of the dethroned ruler. During their absence, and while the army was suffering great fatigue in the wilderness, a plot was discovered on the part of the natives to surprise and kill Cortes and his guard. Although Guatemozin professed entire innocence of this conspiracy, and although no evidence appeared against him, Cortes commanded a hasty court-martial, and

Guatemozin was sentenced to death. Thus, in spite of the liberal promises of Cortes, the heir to all the empire of the Montezumas ignominiously perished—hung to one of the trees of his own forests.

When Cortes returned to the capital he found affairs therein in a state of anarchy, the officers in power quarreling among themselves and maltreating the helpless natives. Officials were sent out from Spain to enquire into the condition of the country, and such accusations were made against Cortes that he determined to go to the imperial throne and there vindicate his tarnished character in person. He was received with great honor on his arrival, and the power of his presence soon cleared the suspicions against him. The great service he had rendered the Castilian empire was sufficient to command the grateful respect of his sovereign, and he was created Marquis of the Valley of Oaxaca, where large grants of land were assigned to him and his heirs. King Charles, however, refused to return him as Governor of New Spain, fearing his influence over a people so remote.

With the young wife Cortes had wedded he returned to his estates in Mexico, and attempted farther expeditions of discovery and colonization, but the fates seemed now to have declared against him. His star of fortune had risen to its zenith, and was now fast sinking to the horizon. Again he

was accused of over-ambition, and in order to maintain his name, and to obtain redress for the losses of his expeditions, he once more set sail for Spain. The day of his glory had, however, darkened, and after years of discouragement and failure, he died, in 1547, a disappointed man.

Of the character of Cortes we, in this day, are hardly capable of judging. In the fact that he was possessed of an ambition that surmounted, by whatever means, every obstacle in his path, lay the very secret of his power. Cruel and unscrupulous he was in carrying out the projects of his career, yet brave and generous during the hardships of his campaigns. His faults were the faults of his age, when might made right, and the power of the sword decided the title to conquest. The fanaticism of his religion, then the ruling spirit of his land, gave to the very atrocities of his invasion a similitude of holiness, and, as in the Crusades, surrounded his deeds with the halo of sanctity, while the heroes who fell under his banner received the crowns of martyrdom. To the religion that justified for its own gain such cruelties, and even set upon them its blessing, rather than to the character of the man who successfully led this gigantic enterprise, should be laid the sin of its injustice and cruelty.

The vice-regal period in New Spain which followed the governorship of the Conqueror was one of uninteresting succession of rulers, entirely de-

pendent upon the home-government for their appointment and continuance. The regents were wholly unable, even when anxious for the good of the oppressed people of their adoption, to act with independent judgment, or to conduct affairs otherwise than for the aggrandizement of his imperial majesty, the Emperor of Spain, and his favorites.

The vast mines of Mexico were extensively worked. Cities sprang up here and there, and fine cathedrals were built, but all the money that escaped the imperial treasury remained in the Church or in the hands of the Spanish nobles, now lords of the country; and the people suffered the extremities of poverty and oppression. For almost three centuries they submitted to the undisputed sway of foreign rule, until in 1810 a first decisive blow for liberty was struck in Mexico. Hidalgo was the leader of this insurrection, and under his banner, unfurled for independence, thousands of his countrymen rallied. Although at first successful, he was finally defeated and executed; but his cause did not die. Morelos, a patriot of unusual attractions and qualifications, assumed the leadership, and after repeated victories the first Declaration of Independence in Mexico, November, 1813, was proclaimed.

Colonel Augustin Iturbide, an important personage in subsequent Mexican history, defeated and captured Morelos. Many other patriotic leaders fell, and for the next few years the spirit of

independence smouldered nigh unto death. The brave chief, Guerrero, maintained his little band of followers in the inaccessible fastnesses of the mountains, and by his indefatigable energy he kept alive the sacred sparks of freedom in the hearts of the people. In 1819 considerable success followed his attacks upon the Spanish forces, and in 1820 Iturbide astonished the world by declaring in favor of the people, and by joining his forces to those of the brave Guerrero. With astute intelligence he read the possibilities of the future, and determined to turn them to his own account. Brave, active, and skilled in diplomacy, he soon became the people's favorite.

The famous Plan of Iguala, laid upon the principles of union, civil and religious freedom, was drawn up, and in 1821 the combined armies entered the capital amidst great rejoicing and without opposition. Don Juan O'Donoju, the sixty-fourth and last viceroy from the mother-country, was compelled to acknowledge the independence of Mexico. A Congress was called the following year, but Iturbide had so ingratiated himself into the hearts of the people that they declared in favor of a monarchy and proclaimed him Emperor. Under the title of Augustin I. he was duly crowned with great pomp.

The aggressive ambition of the Emperor soon became so apparent, however, that his popularity rapidly waned, and the fickle Mexicans looked for

another leader. One appeared in Santa Anna, just rising on the ever-shifting stage of Mexican politics. He issued a pronunciamiento in favor of the Republic, thus rallying to his standard its late supporters. Finding the opposition so strong that resistance was useless, Iturbide abdicated the throne nine months after his coronation. He was permitted to leave the country, but when, about a year later, he ventured to return he was arrested and shot.

The next few years of Mexican history are but a series of insurrections, revolutions and struggles between the various parties and military leaders to obtain the reins of power. No form of government existed with any degree of security. Anarchy and rebellion stalked abroad with their attendant horrors, and every peace was broken almost within the hour of its proclamation. Santa Anna led one turbulent faction, and twice succeeded in his ambitious designs to head the government; but disgrace followed, and he was finally obliged to flee the country.

With the breaking out of the war with the United States over the disputed boundary between the two countries and the admission of Texas into the Union of the States, Santa Anna was recalled and placed in command of the army. He was an efficient and stalwart general, and if he could have commanded the united efforts of the country and her party-leaders, undoubtedly he would have driven

our courageous little armies back with ease. But even though an enemy stormed at her very gates there were disagreements and feuds within; and the brilliant victories, won by our gallant American soldiers against enormous odds, might have been rendered impossible by the concerted action of the Mexican Government.

To General Scott, who led the army up the steep of the cordillera, who charged Cherubusco, stormed Chapultepec, and entered the City of Mexico, belongs much of the honor of final success. Consequent upon this war the United States concluded the favorable treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, 1847, by which, for a few millions and the discharge of Mexico's indebtedness to our Government, we obtained possession of California, New Mexico, much of Arizona, and settled the disputed boundary line between Texas and Mexico. Little wonder that our Sister Republic for a long time begrudged us this vast territory, soon found to rival her own mines in its stores of silver and gold. For a time after this treaty peace held its merciful sway over Mexico, rather from the utter prostration of its people than from the stability of its Government, and in a few years revolutions again began to arise in the land. Then came the attempts of foreign powers to assume the control of the Government, and the establishment of Maximilian as Emperor, followed by his dethronement and death, already described.

Finally men of discretionary abilities and clear-headed statesmanship had arisen in this troubled country, and after throwing off the interference from across the waters they succeeded in establishing the long-struggling Republic. The steady, unswerving will of Juarez induced universal reform, and while one hand was crushing insurrection and guerrilla warfare, the other was grasping the storm-tossed Ship of State and was guiding it safe into the Harbor of Peace.

The Constitution, framed upon that of the United States, was at last accepted by the leaders of the people, and our Sister Republic was enabled to draw a long breath of security. Under the wise and conservative rule of President Diaz she has experienced her greatest period of success, and that the two Republics of North America may long continue to walk side by side in the full enjoyment of national peace and prosperity is the fond hope of every true American.

CHAPTER XXI.

CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

ALTHOUGH drawn up under the most trying governmental conditions and the outgrowth of national feuds the Constitution of the Republic of Mexico is one of the most consistent and perfect codes of law ever framed. It bears the date of February 5, 1857, with various amendments down to the present day, and is based in the main upon the Constitution of the United States, having its executive, legislative and judicial branches formed substantially the same as our own.

Originally the Republic was composed of a confederation of nineteen states; but now it consists of twenty-eight states, two territories and a federal district, that of the City of Mexico, similar to our District of Columbia. Upon entering into a union the states gave up many of their rights, and are now governed by a fundamental law or Constitution, from which there is no appeal, except by amendments in full form of law made by a majority vote of the legislatures of the different states of the Republic. The states have the right to manage their own local affairs, and theoretically they re-

served more of their rights than belong to the several states under the Constitution of the United States of America; but in reality the central government of Mexico has assumed much greater powers, except in the matter of state-tariffs.

The supreme executive power is vested in a President elected for a term of four years by electors professedly chosen by the people. The administration of the various departments of the Government is conducted, under the direction of the President, by a Cabinet of six members, Secretary of State, Secretary of War and Navy, Secretary of Finance, Secretary of Justice and of Public Instruction, Secretary of the Interior, Secretary of Public Works, and Secretary of Foreign Affairs.

Under its original form the legislative powers of the federal government were managed by one body called the House of Deputies. The necessity for two branches soon appearing, the Constitution was amended so as to recognize a Senate and a House of Deputies. At present the Senate is composed of fifty-eight members, two from each state, including the Federal District, and these are elected by the legislatures of the respective states. In the House of Deputies the states are entitled to representation by one member for every forty thousand of the population, elected directly by the people. The senators are elected for a period of four years and the deputies for two years, the members of each house receiving an annual salary of three thousand dollars.

There are by law no educational or property requirements for election to office, although senators must be at least thirty years of age, and deputies twenty-five, and both must be residents of the states they represent. At the time of the election of senators and deputies there is also a duplicate list of alternates or substitutes elected, who, upon the death or disability of members, are entitled to fill their respective places with all their rights. All elections, either on state or federal questions, are by secret ballot, and any male resident, who is of age, is entitled to the privilege of voting without further qualification. The elections are universally held on the Sabbath day, and although nominally free and said to be decided by a majority vote of the people, they are practically under control of the militia who, obeying federal orders, may close the polls at any hour they may select, and may declare their favorite candidate elected, regardless of the number of votes cast in his favor. As yet this seems to be a necessary measure, for the great mass of the people are too miserably poor to have any interest in the affairs of the Government, and too ignorant to have any understanding of the real meaning of popular elections, their lot being, as far as they are able to realize, the same under whatever leader. As fast as the masses become educated to the possibilities of true government by the people this order of affairs will undoubtedly correct itself. The press,

too, is nominally free in Mexico, although any opinions publicly advocated that are not in harmony with the policy of the Administration brings about a *denouncement* of the paper "as an organ opposed to the public good," and the editors must submit to a change of heart or go out of the newspaper business.

The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Deputies are each elected monthly from the body of its members, and in case of the default or disability of the President, the President of the Senate becomes the chief executive, the office falling next in order to the Vice President of the Senate, thus constituting important differences between the legislative organizations of the two American Republics.

There are two annual sessions of Congress, one sitting from the first of April to the thirtieth of May the other from the sixteenth of September to the fifteenth of December. At the close of each session a standing committee is selected, consisting of one member from each state, constituting a sort of interregnum peculiar to the Government of Mexico. This committee acts during vacations and in cases of emergency, with right to confirm presidential appointments and to transact routine business, but with no power to make laws or pass bills.

The supreme judiciary is composed of eleven judges and four supernumeraries who, in case of disability of any of the judges, are empowered to

perform the duties of the bench. These judges are elected directly by the people for a period of six years, the supernumeraries being elected on the same ticket and for the same term of office. The jurisdiction of the inferior tribunals is similar to that of the county courts of the United States. Trial by jury is allowed in criminal cases only. Felonies are heavily punished, and of late years the country has been cleared of the bandits, heretofore infesting the land, through the severe and unswerving policy of the authorities of ordering all such offenders to be shot on first sight. The higher grades of these Gentlemen of the Road, who were practicing a sort of guerrilla warfare and highway robbery during the disturbed periods of the country, have been given positions under the Government as Rural Guards to protect the very roads where once they robbed and murdered. This stroke of policy on the part of the President has been surprisingly conducive of good results. Another wise measure of the present administration toward those formerly holding high military positions against the Government is that of retiring all such officers on salary but without power.

The states are divided into departments, districts, cantons, counties, municipalities, cities, towns, villages, hamlets, missions, haciendas and ranches, resembling in nearly all respects and closely following the minor divisions of the United States in their general government, having in

like manner their auditors, recorders, assessors, revenue collectors and various department officers. The rules for filing documents are, however, different from those of our own states, requiring the original papers to be recorded in blank books and deposited in the proper offices, and none but persons directly interested are permitted to obtain copies of them. In the register's office of some of the cities there still exist deeds, wills and other papers executed as far back as 1540. Stamps are required to be affixed to all official documents, and the *rubrica*, or pen-dash, must be subjoined to every signature in order to make it legal. Of the several states of the Republic Chihuahua is the largest and Jalisco contains the greatest number of inhabitants.

Foreigners may come into possession of land by deed or by will, provided the real estate does not lie within sixty miles of the frontier, or within fifteen miles of the coast. By special permission from the President, however, they may obtain and hold real estate anywhere in the country, although all property held by aliens is under certain governmental restrictions. For example, absence from the country with his family for more than two years without permission from the administration, residence outside of the Republic, even though he has a representative on his estate, or conveyance of his property by will or by deed to persons not residents of the Republic, forfeits to such a propri-

etor his rights of ownership. Under such forfeiture or *denouncement* the property must be sold to a Mexican citizen within two years, or it will be disposed of at public sale; and under the laws the one who makes the denouncement is entitled to one-tenth of the proceeds of the sale, the remainder going to the absent owner, or, if deceased, it is placed to the credit of his heirs. Mining property is not subject to such restrictions, but is under the control of the regular mining laws of the country, and these are the same for non-residents as for native proprietors.

Although much has been said about the rough and reckless character of the people at large in the Republic, both property and life are probably as safe in Mexico as in most other countries. If a tourist deports himself properly, and takes the usual precautions with reference to his valuables, it is not likely that either he or his purse will suffer. Reliable police are stationed about a hundred yards apart throughout the City of Mexico. They are polite, well-informed, and solicitous about the welfare of strangers, and within their individual circles they are on the alert against injustice, and ever ready to give any necessary information or assistance. At night they place their signal-lamps along the streets at regular intervals to indicate where they may be found. Often travelers in our own cities would be glad indeed to see police lights scattered about the streets one

hundred yards apart. It is interesting to observe that even the most reckless drivers take the utmost precaution not to upset these lamps, a heavy fine or imprisonment being in every case the result of such insolent carelessness to the signals of authority. Herein may possibly lie the explanation why there are no milk-wagons in the city, milk being delivered by porters, or bought at the markets. Owing partly to the stringent police regulations and partly to the native courtesy of the inhabitants, people move about politely, and families may return from the theatres or cafés in their carriages or on foot by night with as much safety as in Washington or New York. The same regulations are being extended to the other cities of the Republic, under the conservative and wise rule of the present administration.

To-day the militia takes the place largely of the police force outside of the capital city, each state having a military force of its own. In addition to the State Militia the general government sustains a regular army of twenty-five thousand on a peace-footing, although nominally twice this number, with large reserves for war emergencies, and at an annual cost of about eight million dollars. The army is well drilled, and equipped with carbines and Remington rifles, and their cavalry with sabres of American make. In their dress-uniforms of dark blue they make an imposing appearance and are not to be trifled with. The navy

consists of four or five gun-boats only serviceable for patrol duty along coast.

The Mexican Government recognizes as its public debt the engagements only of its legitimate representatives, and has repudiated as illegal all the loans negotiated under the authority of the Maximilian administration, but freely standing responsible for all agreements under true governmental treaties. Owing to large grants made to railroad corporations, to a revision of foreign tariff laws by which a considerable reduction of revenue has resulted, and owing to the extensive commercial and public improvements throughout the country, their national debt has increased, even though the present administration has greatly reduced the salaries of public officials, and has carefully considered the questions of political economy. However, the firm basis of the present Government, its conservative policy and its improved financial system have so bettered the credit of the country that bonded loans can now be made with comparative ease.

State banks can hardly be said to exist, and the difficulty of cashing drafts on banks outside of the City of Mexico is sometimes a source of considerable annoyance to travelers. The variety of coinage in circulation in the different states is also very troublesome, as moneys, except the adobe dollars, gold coins, and the City of Mexico bills, obtained in one city of the Republic are refused in

another. On the Vera Cruz Railway one meets with the ludicrous and inconsistent experience of having the very money that is given to him in change at one end of the road refused for return passage by the agent at the other end. The pennies in legal circulation in one state are often indignantly cast aside by the beggars just across the line. As a pleasant contrast to these petty money annoyances, it is a matter of great satisfaction to travelers that the ridiculous system of passports, so common in Europe, does not obtain in Mexico. Tourists will be pleased to learn, also, that in the last few years great improvements have been made in the heretofore miserable accommodations of the postal service, many new offices being opened and the old ones being conducted on more wide-awake and systematic principles.

The question of state-tariffs is one of serious importance to the Republic of Mexico. The system is not recognized by the federal constitution and is contrary to its codes; but the state governments hold that it is necessary for their continuance, and, therefore, all merchandise is held subject to taxation through every state it passes, in addition to the government duties levied on foreign goods upon their entrance into the country. The only exception to this exaction is in the Free Zone, a belt twenty kilometres wide (a little more than twelve miles), where foreign goods necessary for the consumption of the people in that part of

the country are imported free of duty. This free belt was first established in the State of Tamaulipas in 1858, being thought to be conducive to state interest, and it was sanctioned by the Federal Congress three years later. It was extended in 1885 to the states of Coahuila, Chihuahua, Sonora and the territory of Lower California. Although free imports to this zone are carried on under strict rules and regulations, the opening up of a free coast gives endless opportunities for the smuggling of goods into the more prosperous states of the Republic, and it is therefore questionable whether the concession is of any benefit to the country at large. A revision of the import-duty list, a gradual abolishment of internal tariff, and a revolution in the sources of revenue to the country will undoubtedly result from its continued prosperity and liberal government.

At present, state-rights are carried to their logical conclusion. If goods cross the border at any point for shipment into the interior of the country they must go to the custom-house of each state, where a revenue tax is levied in every instance. As an illustration of the manner of carrying out this system let us suppose that a car of heavy machinery enters the country at New Laredo. Certificates of its value are not sufficient for the Mexican officials. The car is unloaded and, at a considerable expense charged of course to the recipient, the goods are carted to the custom-house, usually

about a mile away, where the federal tax is levied; then they are returned to the railway station and re-loaded, having lost at least a full day's time by the operation. Thirty miles farther on the railroad-car enters the state of Tamaulipas, where it is again unloaded, the goods carried to the custom-house, taxed, returned and re-loaded, losing another day or more under the rules. At Monterey the state of Nuevo Leon has its custom-house, with the same right to taxation, and a similar procedure is gone through with, and so on with every state that the car enters, until the collective duties have more than doubled the original cost of the goods, not to mention the inconveniences of the delays nor the damages from careless handling. These methods are necessarily fatal to any enterprise requiring foreign goods or machinery, and in course of time the people must see the injustice of such a system of taxation, tending as it does to the benefit of the Mexican capitalist and manufacturer, and to the positive injury of the consumer.

CHAPTER XXII.

A VISIT TO A MEXICAN VILLA.

FROM these long digressions among the musty leaves of the past and the dry records of the present, let us return to the fascinating days spent in the capital city of the Land of the Montezumas. Although every day has been filled with interest, none has delighted us more than the eventful one that gave us admission to the beautiful villa of the Escandon family, situated in Tacubaya, a suburban town distant about four miles from the centre of the city. A tramway runs there, starting, as do most of the lines, from the Zocalo, where a gay and busy scene presents itself to us as we seat ourselves on one of the iron benches to await the car.

Men of all classes cross and recross the checkered sunshine and shade of the delicious little park. The courteous Spaniard is strictly conventional in his black broadcloth and silk hat, although perhaps an hour ago he was dashing along the paseo, both himself and his steed arrayed in the full richness of Mexican attire. Men and women of the common people, with their crates of merchandise, baskets of fruits and vege-

tables, or bundles and babies, as the case may be, pass us by on either hand. In and out of the Sagrario door comers and goers constantly surge. Occasionally a lady of rank, attended by her maid, crosses the square, with her face so veiled by the folds of the mantilla that little remains visible. In front of the Palace two sentinels pace up and down with military precision, and in the courtyard are others of the relief-guard ready for duty at the bugle's call. Against the church the flower-stands are burdened with masses of bright color and fragrant perfumes. Every-where is the white, streaming light of brilliant sunshine, except where the trees above us fleck the grass with moving shadows, or the long, straight lines of the Cathedral walls blackly define themselves across the walk.

At last our car comes with a whirl around the corner; and a ride of four miles on a Mexican tramway is not so tedious as one would expect from the appearance of the little mules that draw the cars. They are small in body but great in endurance, and by an unsparing use of the whip the drivers keep them on a dead run from start to finish, except when halted at the instance of a passenger. To us the way was so full of interest that it seemed exceeding short.

Passing through the city we observed many massive buildings that speak well of the present prosperity of Mexico, while the rich, carved fronts

and sky-reaching towers of fine cathedrals tell of the time when Church power was pre-eminent in the land. Many of these sacred edifices have been confiscated, and are now used for various secular purposes. At length the way lay across the arches of the stone aqueduct leading from Chapultepec, and then out through green fields, where the road is bordered by irrigating ditches fringed with the graceful branches of the willow. Mexicans carrying to the city markets their wares and vegetables, either strapped across their own backs or slung across the backs of burros, constantly pass us on our way. The loads of pulque are comical sights, for pig-skins are filled with it, and then tied together by the feet, two and two, and thrown across the burros, from whose backs they dangle like jelly-fat pigs, their sides apparently shaking with inward laughter.

The Mexicans relate a ludicrous story for the benefit of curious Americans who insist on learning how these pig-skins, in such universal use, are obtained apparently whole: The pig, as the story runs, is tied by the tail to a tree, and there made to fast for a period of nine days. At the end of the stated time a peon approaches and holds an ear of corn at a tempting distance from its nose, when the almost famished pig becomes so frantic at the sight of food that it literally jumps out of its skin in order to secure the corn.

Tacubaya is little more than a village, but, as

usual, it has its grassy plaza, at which the street-car route ends. From this point we had but a short walk to the place we were to visit and soon we reached the gate, presented our pass to the *portero* and were admitted to a large park studded with magnificent old trees and beautiful with rare flowers in full bloom. When at length we had arrived at the mansion we found the housekeeper, a man, waiting to receive us. Men, almost exclusively, are employed as house-servants in the private establishments as well as in the hotels of Mexico. This man was an old family-retainer, and having grown gray in the service now held complete charge of this elegant home. The owners have been in Europe for many years, and even when in Mexico they spend but little time here, as they have several spacious residences in and about the city, all of which are kept in as perfect readiness as though the master were hourly expected. The family is one of the wealthiest in the country and they live like very princes.

The house has no especial architectural beauty, except its massiveness and simplicity. It is two stories high, square and plain, with a large, bowed front, and surrounded by a broad veranda and an arcade. Inside it is like the pictured dreams of fairy-land, every room being a marvel of richness and beauty. There are several reception-parlors, a breakfast and a dining-hall, elegant card-apartments and a music-room. The latter opens into

the large double parlors, which are in the front of the house, and from which there is a beautiful and grand view out over the sloping lawn, through the vista of imposing trees, to the country beyond, even to the snow-capped peaks of the twin volcanoes visible above the horizon. These apartments are magnificently furnished with brocaded satin upholstery and hangings, and are lighted from elegant chandeliers of solid crystal that sparkle like massive diamonds in the morning sunlight.

The bric-a-brac and *vertu* about the house, gathered from all parts of the world, are marvelous in the extreme. There is everything in the way of ornamentation that an exquisite taste could suggest, or money buy from the hand of art. Beautiful statuettes of Dresden china stand in the dainty cabinets, and lovely flower-ornaments in porcelain, rivaling nature in their delicacy of color and texture; large bronze figures and alabaster vases rest on marble and onyx pedestals, busts of famous old Romans, miniature *fac-similes* of Roman triumphal arches, and a complete reproduction of the Coliseum done in Italian marble; and there are hundreds of pictures as fine as the most artistic hand has ever painted. Some of these, very large and by the old masters, are of ecclesiastic subjects; others, of more modern date, pictured landscapes and figures, and some are the most exquisite of gems, as perfect, and as beautiful, and as dainty, as any heart can wish.

Over a mantel in the dining-hall is a lovely painting of a Scottish moorland, from which arises a grim watch-tower with the illumined face of a clock in its walls. As we look again, questioning if the hands are not moving, it strikes the hour of the day softly, and with a far-off cadence as if sounding in very truth from the tower of some lonely castle. In the library a large Italian mosaic attracts our attention. It is a marvel of skillfully arranged bits of colored stones whose rich effects must be seen to be realized. It represents Christ rescuing Peter in his fruitless attempt to walk upon the waters of Galilee. There is an angry sea, with the waves rolling and tossing high before the wind. The crest of every wave is set with mother-of-pearl that gleams and glimmers as if silvered by the light of the moon riding wildly among the dispersing clouds. A boat rocks in the distance, and in the foreground are the figures of Christ and of Peter surrounded by a celestial light, whose brilliant beams make one of the chief beauties of the picture, throwing out with wonderful art the central characters. This rare piece of art hangs over a massive secretary composed entirely of inlaid ivory and mother-of-pearl. In the same room are two cabinets of solid rose-wood inlaid with ivory in very intricate and beautifully artistic patterns. These are filled with elegantly bound books, in Spanish, French and Latin, that testify to the refinement and literary tastes of the princely

owners. Portraits of many members of the family hang here and there, and show them to be a courtly looking race of the Spanish type found in the northern provinces—pure blondes with golden hair and azure eyes, deep hued and heavily fringed. There are now left but six survivors of this family.

From the library we pass into another reception hall, and then into the billiard-room which is ornamented with rich fur rugs, while upon the walls are arranged a shield bearing the family coat-of-arms, stag-heads, swords, spears, bows and arrows, coats-of-mail and other paraphernalia of the hunter and soldier. In the hall-way we come upon a magnificent, antique clock, very large and with heavy mahogany frame, grown rich with age. It combines the duties of a chronometer, a barometer, and an almanac, and at the turning of the hour it chimes forth an exquisite peal of bells. Now we enter the court, and find this to be the chief charm of the house. It is used as the general sitting-room. Unlike the courts of the town houses it is not open to the sky, but runs up two stories and is then enclosed with a glass dome. It is square, constructed in the centre of the house, and around it all the other rooms cluster. Here the finest of the ornaments and the richest of the paintings are gathered. It abounds in the most luxuriously easy chairs and inviting satin-covered divans, and is a perfect bower of beauty, elegance and courtly comfort. In one corner stands a music-

box almost as large as a piano, with a case of rose-wood delicately inlaid with mother-of-pearl and jewels. Its music may be either powerful as a band, or faintly sweet as the lute, accordingly as the rollers are selected, and with a full combination of which the entire force of an orchestra may resound.

From this spacious apartment runs the broad stair-way to the upper story. It is of marble, and deeply panelled along the side with Mexican onyx, relieved by several beautiful statues set in deep niches. The upper floor is occupied entirely with sleeping apartments simply but elegantly furnished. We missed the air of home, which, in the States, would have been given them by the addition of those trifles of which we Americans are particularly fond, or which, perhaps, their owners would have supplied if they had been living there. Before leaving we visited the kitchen, and this, like all the rest of the house, was in perfect order and as neat as the most fastidious Yankee house-keeper could desire, from its polished white floor and tables to the bright, copper cooking-utensils hanging in rows upon the walls. The range was really artistic, being very large and made of brick covered with blue and white tiles. This is the only place in all this elegant home for a fire, as even the Spanish nobility shares the prejudice of the lower classes against the use of artificial heat in this climate, and prefer to wrap themselves in their

elaborate mantillas and serapes during the cool of the evening, rather than risk the enjoyment and cheering comfort of a blazing fire-place.

From the house we were conducted to the family chapel standing near by, and which we found to be a dainty bit of ecclesiastical architecture. It is ornamented with richly tinted windows that admit the light through the figures of saints and martyrs. Fine paintings and the elaborately decorated altar, with its images of Jesus and of Mary, combine to beautify this saintly place. On the grounds there are also houses for the servants, a bowling alley, boat- and bath-houses, a conservatory, and extensive and richly equipped stables. The whole place is so beautiful and grand that one wonders how the owners can prefer to wander in foreign climes rather than remain in their own elegant homes, under the sunny skies of their native land.

On our return from this magnificent *villa* for the living, we visited one of the cities for the dead, the cemetery of San Fernando, where many of Mexico's illustrious men have found their last home. Some rest in the earth under stately marbles, others in the compartments with which the sides of the walls are provided in tiers of three, just large enough to admit a casket, the faces being sealed with marble slabs and respectively engraved with the name and date of death of the deceased. These vaults are either bought or rent-

ed for a certain number of years, after which the authorities are at liberty to dispose of the remains by burial in a common grave.

The tomb of Juarez is here, and is the point of attraction in the cemetery. It is marked by a fine, life-sized figure, in marble, of the great conqueror, lying at full length in the arms of his mistress, Mexico, represented by the figure of a beautiful woman. In writing of the different heroes resting in this cemetery, Ober has a paragraph so ripe with the condensed history of storm-tossed Mexico that it deserves a place in every book written on this question :

“Here lie buried many of the unfortunate generals and leaders of the people, who have been executed by their countrymen, either by the people because they leaned toward Spain, or by the Spaniards because they favored the people. They died for their country, all of them, and through their deaths, although they fell fighting on different sides, is their beloved land now made glorious. I wonder if there will be any reproaches in order, when the last trump shall summon all these heroes to their final awards. Let us imagine them pleading their cases :

“‘I,’ for instance, says Iturbide, ‘struck the decisive blow that freed my country from the yoke of Spain.’

“‘Yes,’ will reply some rank republican, ‘and set up an empire of your own.’

“ ‘But I first blew the trumpet-call of freedom,’ will claim the bold Hidalgo. And some member of the Church party will retort: ‘And in so doing, sealed the doom of your Catholic mother.’

“The irrepressible Santa Anna will doubtless attempt to prove that he was the savior of Mexico; but some of his numerous enemies will fling at him his supreme selfishness, and enumerate his defeats at the hands of the Americans.

“Guerrero and Comonfort, and a host of generals who made their fortunes and lost their lives in the cause, fighting in the light that then shone on them, will not allow themselves to be ignored. Miramon and Mejia will point to their martyrdom in the cause of the Church and the Empire, while Maximilian will loftily claim that the imperial government he represented, and gave his life for, was the only one fitted for Mexico. Juarez will undoubtedly rest securely, confident that the peace and progress resulting from his administration is his title to a seat among the elect. But what will they all say when there appears the apparition of the great warrior who made their feeble exercise of power a possibility? Will they not shrink before his terrible features, and allow him a hearing without interruption? Cortes, the conqueror, the chosen of the Lord, the fighter of the faith, the murderer of Indians of royal blood, the founder of Spanish dominion in New Spain—all must bow before him, unless the Aztecs, whom he destroyed,

be allowed to have a voice in the matter. Montezuma and Guatemozin! what burning brands ye could cast at the Spanish bigot! Would he bow his head before your reproaches, or would he fling at you the long record of the victims of the sacrifice murdered by you and your ancestors? The record of Cortes is not a true one, if he would not overwhelm you with evidence that he did the world a service in destroying you and your religion.

"Now, not all these heroes are buried here in San Fernando, but the few that are, having represented politics of such different complexions, suggest the thoughts expressed above. Who is to judge which of these men were in the right? It is my opinion that no more difficult problem will arise at the last judgment, than when these Mexican heroes shall put in their appearance for a final award."

CHAPTER XXIII.

HERE AND THERE ABOUT THE CITY.

THERE still remain many places of interest about this ancient capital. A morning drive through the principal business streets, through the residence portions, and then out into the squalid quarters of the poor, and we have a fair idea of the extent and character of the city. San Francisco street is perhaps the main thoroughfare. It starts from the central plaza, and its first few squares are faced with many massive business blocks and some fine churches. The Iturbide Hotel stands but half a square from the plaza, and further out the Guardiola faces the same street. Across from this hotel, overlooking the little grass plat known as Guardiola Square, is one of the noble residences of the Escandon family. The lower story is now given up to railroad offices. Adjacent to this property is the famous Tile House, which has long attracted the attention of tourists to this city, and has been described in our popular magazines as one of the noted houses of America. The entire exterior of this unique residence is composed of white porcelain tiles daintily decorated with blue, its square

structure being relieved by jutting balconies, richly encased windows and carved arch-ways.

Farther on, the street passes the Alameda, and runs on out to the grand paseo, taking a different name at almost every square; for the Mexicans seem to have feared that the long list of names in their Saints Calendar, and in their Blue Book, would outnumber the streets in their city, and hence this absurd attempt to honor the names of their noted people. Fortunately the custom is dying out, and probably will in time be entirely obliterated, to the joy of the stranger who now finds himself lost in a maze of names when attempting to follow even one continuous street.

The homes of the members of the Legation in Mexico rival each other in beauty and grandeur. Many have extensive grounds that teem with the abundant and varied vegetation of this almost tropical clime. The National Library is a princely collection of volumes that repose under the stately walls of a confiscated monastery, whose richly carved front is one of the most impressive in Mexico. What was formerly the chapel of this monastery is now the main chamber, and before its confiscation it was a series of arched recesses containing side altars, or devotional stations, where the cowed head bowed in deep humility. Each archway holds to-day cases reaching from floor to vaulted roof, filled with a high order of literature.

The Monte de Piedad, or Government Pawn

Shop, facing one end of the plaza, is one of the noblest buildings of the Republic, both from its massive grandeur and for its enormous beneficence as a governmental charity. It was founded in the flourishing days of Spanish dominion by the noted Count de Regla, who endowed it from his abundance with several hundred thousand dollars; and in spite of revolutions and wars it has continued unhalting in its benefits to the needy, while at the same time it has more than doubled its dowry. Its object is to enable the destitute to obtain advancements on personal property of whatever kind, and at a low rate of interest. A three-fourths payment is made to the owner on the valuation decided upon by two appraisers connected with the institution. So long as the interest is kept up the article remains merely as collateral, and may be redeemed by the owner at any time on payment of the original loan. After forfeiture it is put on sale, and, if not disposed of in a stated time, it is offered at public auction, any increase of price above the sum advanced being placed with interest to the account of the borrower, or his heirs, for a hundred years, when, if not claimed, it reverts to the institution. The assortments, here to be found, of jewels, ornaments, bric-a-brac, lace mantillas, and rare, old flounces of which the Mexican woman is so fond, testify to the decaying fortunes of Spanish nobility since the government coffers ceased to empty their riches into such restricted channels.

By every means in their power they seek to keep up the semblance of their former glory. Many a treasure is given up to enable some family in straitened circumstances to enjoy with the apparent ease of better days the pleasure of an opera season or the gayeties of the winter balls. The meaner pawn-shops, of which the city is full, contain a heterogeneous mass of articles from the lowest classes, and are mainly the places for disposing of stolen goods, or for the hiding of them until search has been abandoned.

The mint is another place of great importance, its entire coinage of the silver and gold moneys of the country counting up into the billions. The shops are attractive places, although the great stalls of all sorts of goods, on the outside of the regular stores, and under the great arched portales, are of more interest to the tourist because more foreign. Ladies of rank in Mexico seldom enter the stores to do their shopping, the goods being either taken to them in their carriages, or sent to their residence for inspection, while the buying of furniture, and shopping of the heavier sort, is left to the male members of the family. Until recently a Spanish lady would have been disgraced if seen walking on the streets of the city, especially if unattended. Under the increasing influence of the American and French elements, the Spanish customs are growing more liberal and less tinged with the false ethics of mediæval days.

Perhaps no point in Mexico inspires more romantic interest in the heart of the tourist than the so-called Floating Gardens; and, therefore, it is with no little enthusiasm that we start on our trip to these isles sacred to the memory of early Aztec occupation in the country. By street-car we reach the borders of the *Viga*, or canal, where, on alighting, we are immediately beset by a score of vociferous boatmen, whose gaily decorated crafts lie on the waters of the canal waiting for passengers to take this trip of pleasure. Our friend knows the Mexican character too well to show any interest in a trip of this sort, or even to intimate an intention of going on the canal, until the crowd falls away and the few persistent boatmen have lessened their charges. Finally he makes a bargain with one of these fellows, who has a comfortable looking boat, and for something less than one-fifth of the original demand.

The *Viga* is exceedingly interesting, with its banks shaded by graceful trees, and with its boats passing to and fro, stirring in the breeze. It is a narrow strip of water, intended only for small boats, and is the great thoroughfare by which the natives bring in their loads of vegetables for the city markets. Our boatman propels us with a sort of gentle, undulating motion by pushing with his long pole, now against the shore, now against the bottom of the canal, keeping time with snatches of song interrupted by the exchange of sallies with

his fellows. Whenever a bridge is neared he lowers his flag and then carefully replaces it after passing, and on we glide under the low arch of the custom-house station through which every boat going into or out of the city must pass, and if carrying any merchandise whatever must pay its tax to the Government. Any attempt to evade this universal tariff on the commerce of the country incurs the probability of a fine, confiscation and imprisonment, so stringent are the internal revenue laws.

At length we reach the famous Floating Gardens, which, however, no longer float. They are simply little islands interlaced with strips of water by which they are made exceedingly fruitful. Tradition tells us that when the early Aztecs were but a savage tribe in the valley they were so beset by enemies that, in order to protect themselves and their products, they constructed these movable islands by making huge basket-shaped pockets of the rushes growing along the shore. These they filled with earth, and by buoying them with poles they could be towed about, out of the reach of the enemy.

With the accumulation of earth and vegetation, and with the lowering of the waters of the lake, these floating islands have become solid land; and although some travelers affirm that a few movable islands are still to be found out in the deep lake to bear witness to the truth of this myth of the past,

one is, nevertheless, strongly inclined to be incredulous of a story so tempting to the romance-loving natures of the narrators of these tales. Some of the modern historians, however, give us a modified view of these historic Gardens, that bears a closer semblance to the true explanation. From them we learn that they were probably constructed by cutting sections from the interwoven growths of the canes and rushes matted with *débris* that marred portions of the lake's surface. By piling upon this slightly floating *fabrique* sufficient earth to sustain vegetation, gardens and homes were made for the wanderers driven here and there by tribes more savage and more powerful than themselves. These garden-plats rose and fell with the waters of the lake, and perhaps shifted about slightly from place to place until their depth and growth caused them to rest firmly upon the lake bottom. It is said that there are still open places along the causeways between the canals where the natives can dive through from one to another; and a story is told of a convict who escaped in this way from a boat, diving and rising to the surface on the other side of the causeway and thus successfully eluding his pursuers.

A little Indian village is collected at the point where we alighted, a pulque-stand being its outpost. We regaled our boatman with a glass of this vile beverage, the effects of which were noticeable in his increased activity on the return trip.

The village is composed of a few scattered huts built of cane-stalks, and roofed with strips of maguey. The floors are the bare earth, but the few into which we looked were swept, and as clean as though of wood. The sole furniture consisted of a large rush mat, serving as bed and chair. Each hut has its surrounding garden of vegetables, or flowers; and bouquets of both were offered us at every turn, for the natives have an ingenious way of coloring and cutting the fleshy portions of the turnip into shell-like flowers with which they tempt the purse of the tourist.

These island-gardens are connected by frail wooden bridges, the passage-ways between them being little more than ditches which serve to irrigate the land. If more moisture is required the laborious native dips up the water from the lake and pours it over his precious gardens, which bring him, at best, but the scantiest livelihood. The land is further fertilized by scraping up the rich mud from the bottoms and spreading it upon the surface.

Our return was by the same route as the outgoing trip, but the novelty of the ride and of the scene was too great for monotony, and almost unwillingly we stepped upon the shore again at the point where we were to take a car to the city. While waiting we watched the drilling of a company of recruits from the Mexican army who were going through their graceful evolutions, not to the

stentorian voice of military command, but to the musical notes of the bugle, every sound of which indicates a corresponding movement just as definitely as the "Shoulder Arms," "Present Arms," "Forward March," of our militia tactics.

The Republic of Mexico sustains a large standing-army, but needs comparatively few penitentiaries and prisons, as a considerable portion of her criminals are drafted into army service. On their caps of white cloth are bands with letters in black indicating not only that they are convicts but also their term of service. Some of these convict-soldiers bear upon their countenances greater evidences of brutal criminality than any such badge can indicate; while others have faces rather pitiful than wicked. These enforced companies are officered from the academies and are under constant surveillance of eye and trigger. The slightest sign of an attempt to escape from the barracks or the ranks is but a signal for the swift-flying bullet. Some of these men are as dainty with the needle as any woman, and occasionally there may be seen some rough fellow working on the march on a piece of gossamer embroidery that fairly flies under his deftly plying fingers. Before the influx of foreigners had brought a demand for such work the fine embroideries and airy drawn-work of the Mexicans could have been purchased in the country for a mere song; but now the song must be set to notes of gold and silver, value for value.

The curious feather-work pictures and unique rag-images are characteristic souvenirs that every tourist wishes to take with him as mementos of his trip to Mexico. The art of working on feathers flourished in the olden days of the Montezumas, and among the rich and elaborate presents received by Cortes from the Aztec Emperor were many beautiful cloaks and robes finely wrought in feathers. The handiwork consists of the tinted and many-colored feathers wrought into complete pictures, as daintily portrayed as if the work of an artist's brush, and yet it is done by as uncleanly looking Indians as can be imagined.

The making of rag-images is another curiously artistic industry. Their frame-work, or body, is of moulded glue, and this is then covered with cloth, in exact tint, and form, and dress, of the character represented. These images are taken from every phase of Mexican life, from the gaily attired *caballero* on his richly caparisoned steed to the lowest *lepero* of the streets; and every detail of complexion, feature and dress is imitated to perfection, from the bright buckles and silver spurs of the rider to the rags and dirt of the beggar.

Another rich treat awaited us on our visit to the San Carlos Academy, the great Picture Gallery of Mexico, founded something over a hundred years ago by King Charles of Spain. Here we would have been glad to devote days, rather than hours, to its enchanting halls hung with a collec-

tion of paintings as magnificent and artistic as can be found in many of the noted galleries of France and Italy. There is, however, an overabundance of ecclesiastical subjects, and one almost wearies of the saints and madonnas that look from every wall and corner, although many of them are exquisite works of art. The first hall we entered was filled with the paintings of Mexican artists of two or three centuries ago, numbers of them being noble in conception and beautiful in execution, and all worthy of careful study. The next room contained fine examples of the European schools, many being originals of the old masters, while many others are masterly copies. Two were pointed out to us as genuine Murillos, one being his St. John and the other his Good Samaritan, the latter represented by a slender figure of a young man with the almost dead form of a stricken brother upon his shoulder, under whose load he would have sunk exhausted but for the kindly assistance of his guardian angel, who walks beside him and helps to carry the over-heavy burden. In the marvelous massing of the lights and shades in these pictures seems to lie the secret of this artist's power.

Three master-pieces are from the brush of the great Rubens, one being an almost life-sized Descent from the Cross. There is an exquisite Virgin Mary by Perugino, a painting attributed to Titian, a Saint Sebastian from the hand of Van

Dyke, and many others from the Italian and Dutch schools.

The other halls abound in the works of Mexican artists of the last century, the *Las Casas* Protecting the Aztecs, by Felix Parra, being one of the most noted paintings of the country. A very large picture of Columbus at the Court of Ferdinand and Isabella, offering the fruits of his voyage to the New World, and some beautiful landscapes of the exquisite Valley of Mexico, by the renowned Velasco, are also to be seen here. Perhaps the most striking painting of the entire collection, and the one that will remain longest in the memory, is *The Deluge*, by Coglieti. From out the vast waste of waters only one rock projects, rough and rugged. A powerful lioness, with one of her cubs in her mouth and another at her feet, clings to one side of the wave-washed cliff, looking out over the angry billows, with eyes that speak her wild and hopeless terror. But a few steps away a little group of people cling to this last refuge from the ever-rising waters—man and beast remembering not their animosities in the face of Nature's threatening powers. There is a tender mother with her babe dying in her wearied arms; here is a gray-haired man holding the beautiful form of his daughter in his agonized embrace, vainly endeavoring to revive her spirit gone beyond recall; and there is a little knot of children feebly sustaining one another in their awful suffer-

ings, and all in tragic suspense. The grouping is beautiful; the effects of the flesh-tints marvelous; the lowering sky true to nature, and the realistic finish is in the height of art. Life lives upon the canvas, while the gray-white form of the daughter makes one almost feel the cold touch of death. Every face expresses the agonizing terror of the creeping, rising waters soon to engulf them all. One gazes long upon the scene, transfixed, horror-stricken, yet fascinated with the terrible anguish portrayed—a picture that no one can look upon and forget.

In the Academy there is a School of Drawing where pupils may receive a course of lectures and instruction under competent teachers; and any student showing marked ability is permitted to continue the study into the higher grades under the tuition of the Government.

The bull-fight in Mexico, as everybody knows, like base-ball and horse-racing in the United States, is the popular, open-air amusement. For some reason, possibly to prevent the gathering of too great a throng, this cruel pastime is not permitted within the city limits, but at points just beyond the city line, and reached by tramway or local trains, the bull-fight, with all the horrors of ancient savagery, may be seen on every Sunday and every Feast-day of the year. Crowds of all classes gather in the great arena to watch the exciting scene and to listen to the enlivening music of the great brass

orchestra, applauding wildly as man or beast falls. Several horses and bulls are generally killed at every successful entertainment; but the brilliantly attired *toreadores* and *picadores* are so protected and guarded that they are seldom slain, although frequently more or less seriously wounded through their rashness. Here, as elsewhere, when man fights with the lower animals, he takes care to give himself every possible advantage, and then boasts of his superior strength and courage whenever he comes out of the fray victorious. The most interesting feature of the entire performance is, perhaps, the finish, when the *matador*, it is said, steps into the ring and gives his *coup de grâce* to the nearly exhausted beast, by thrusting his sword straight to the heart of his victim, as over-matched and baited he makes his final but futile charge. Our party was often invited to these thoroughly Mexican amusements, but we declined, and, therefore, the reader will be spared a further description of this inhuman sport.

Our last little trip in the City of Mexico was taken one sunny afternoon, for all the afternoons here are sunny in this delightful season, by street-car out to the Noche Triste tree, where Cortes rested from the labors of that terrible night when his proud band had been driven from the city, and only a sad remnant remained. Just beyond the tree is a church that bears the evidence of its great antiquity, and it is said to be over three and a-half

centuries old, having been built by the order of the Conqueror, a few years after the final overthrow of the Aztec empire. The tree is a gnarled, old cypress, large in girth, but with scanty and weather-worn branches, as the ravages of time have robbed it of its youthful vigor. Part of its heart has been burned out by an Indian jealous of its fame as connected with the great Cortes. It is now surrounded by a high iron fence that effectually protects it from such depredations, and from the knife and hammer of the relic-hunting tourist. On this spot where the Conqueror of the Aztecs gave his adieu to the city of the past, we too will say adieu to the city of to-day.

CHAPTER XXIV.

TIERRAS CALIENTES.

TRAVEL, like love, is a passion that grows by what it feeds upon. There is ever a beyond that one longs to visit, a scene farther on that attracts by its enchanting distance. If that scene is clothed with the luxuriant vegetation of undying summer, and is laid amidst views of surpassing grandeur under the blue skies of the tropics, all the more eagerly one will grasp the opportunity to realize such a life-dream. The promise of a realization like this is before us, for on the morn of the morrow we start, a merry party, on a bright pilgrimage to the Hot Lands of Mexico.

Passing through the suburbs by an old causeway leading to Guadalupe, the towers and domes of whose Cathedral smite down a benign benediction, while on the other hand the Custom-house frowns upon us, we are soon out of the city. Glimpses of Lake Tezcuco are now and then caught off to the right; and across the valley we come into the territory most suited to the cultivation of the maguey. Fields on fields of this enormous plant stretch away for miles on every

side, lining in concise rows both hill and dale with its thrifty growths.

At San Juan we pass in sight of two of the great earth-pyramids attributed to the ancient Toltecs, who had here two of their principal temples, one to the Sun-god, and the other to his sister-wife, the Moon-goddess. From this distance these mounds appear as works of nature rather than as works of man—great pyramidal hills overgrown with cacti, wild-grass and weeds. Otumba soon greets us with its memories of that momentous battle won, as if by superhuman efforts, by the Spaniards against the innumerable host of Aztecs a few days after the historic Night of Sorrow.

As we climb to the higher level of the plateau the scene grows wilder, and the mountainous surroundings more rugged. Bits of verdant meadows, alive with herds of cattle, here and there lie green at the foot of rocky hills. From a commanding crest we gaze back and down into the fair Vale of Anahuac; and through the clear, thin air the beautiful city we have left behind shines dimly in the distance. Like blue-tossed waves the mountains rise, veering and ever changing as we advance; and in their clasping arms lie the valleys softly green as the sea-foam. A dashing brook threads its silvery way beneath feathering branches; the grim walls of a hacienda merge into a distant hillside, and a winding roadway opens into a dusty, brown village, where the faces of the Indian vil-

lagers are as brown as the walls of their adobe huts.

At length we halt at Apam, the great centre of the maguey region and pulque-shipping, whence daily freight-trains carry hundreds of gallons of pulque to the city markets. It is yet morning as we reach the station at Apazaco where we take the branch-line to Puebla. We have risen to an altitude of more than a thousand feet above that of the City of Mexico in these few hours, and are now in the historic state of Tlascala, the smallest in the Republic, but without whose aid Cortes would have failed utterly in his mighty enterprise, and the house of the Montezumas possibly would be still reigning in the land. As we swing round toward Puebla the grandly picturesque mountain, Malinche, towers high upon our vision. This noble peak is Cortes' everlasting monument, its present name being the same as that by which he was known to the Indians. Popocatepetl has come startlingly near, and its mighty elevation is plainly visible from wooded slopes to snow-crowned crest. Ixtaccihuatl extends her giant form beyond, and even the white, vapory cone of Orizaba is outlined against the deep azure of the eastern sky. As the sun reaches the meridian the clustering domes and towers of Puebla, brilliantly set in rich-colored tiles, appear, and soon we alight to begin our sight-seeing in this beautiful city. There is no time to lose in encompassing its novel and curious

attractions, during the short period of our stay, for its charms are indeed many.

The city was founded the first ten years after Spanish occupancy, and still preserves the essential characteristics of the mother-country, although its possession has been battled for and won by various powers. Just three centuries after the founding of the city it was wrested from Spanish bondage by the victorious troops of Iturbide; in 1847 General Scott entered its streets without opposition; the French suffered defeat before its walls in 1862, but captured the city the next year, only to lose it again four years later to the conquering arm of General Diaz.

After a brief rest in one of the most luxuriant plazas we had yet seen, and a hearty luncheon in a neighboring *posada*, we entered the grand Cathedral whose towers, as the custom runs, look down upon the leafy verdure of the square. Hardly is there a cathedral in the New World that more nearly rivals in grandeur that of the City of Mexico than this; and certainly no city of the Republic has been more favored with miraculous demonstrations. Many years ago a shell was found here, bearing beneath its enameled surface the reputed image of the Virgin, and believed by the natives to possess supernatural powers; another image of the Virgin imprinted upon a nun's sleeve, it is claimed, by divine means, has connected with it an incredible story of its discovery and of the

many miracles it has performed; according to common opinion there is a veritable picture of the Saviour here, and held in universal reverence; and every church has its relics of martyrs and saints thought to have performed mysterious cures and to be efficacious against the ills of both body and mind.

The interior of the Cathedral is decorated with the beautiful Mexican onyx quarried but a few miles from Puebla. There are some rare paintings and old tapestries within, and many mementoes of sacred import to the faithful. The towers give a magnificent view of the city and surrounding country adorned with the lofty white-crowned peaks and the dark mountain of the nearer Malinche. Other fine churches and flower-embowered plazas and points of interest are visited, and a drive is taken through the broad, clean streets of the fair city. One of the principal charms of the place lies in the prevalent use of gaily colored tiles for church domes, towers, roofs, and even for house-exterior, giving an enlivening gala-effect to the whole town.

The afternoon has half slipped away when we take the tramway for Cholula, seven miles away. Cortes described this ancient city as one of the fairest in Mexico, second only to the Capital itself in population and in wealth, of unequaled magnificence in its temples and religious appointments, and revered as the sacred city of the Aztecs.

With the overthrow of the heathen religion its importance and power rapidly declined. Its hundreds of mosques have given way to a few churches, bearing the cross of Christ, and all-sufficient for the nine or ten thousand people that make up the city of to-day. The most attractive feature is the great pyramid standing here in mute, yet invincible testimony of an ancient civilization now buried in the deep, dead Sea of the Past, whose darksome waters are pierced only by the shadowy hand of tradition. This monument points to the Toltecs as the probable builders. Like the other pyramids already described this seems at first sight to be a natural mound, but excavations have proved its structure to be of alternate layers of clay and sun-burnt brick. Originally, too, it was encased in adobe, but this has long since weathered away, and cacti and weeds have taken its place. At its base the pyramid is one thousand and sixty feet square; it is two hundred and four feet high, and has a square top, one hundred and sixty-five feet across. From this elevation the beautiful temple to Quetzalcoatl, the God of Air, once reared itself aloft; but to-day a church to the Virgin occupies the same site. One corner of this sacred mound has been cut away by the iconoclast of modern progress that the tramway may carry people to and from its very base. Traces of terraces are still visible on the slopes, and a winding walk leads to the summit whence a

delightful view is obtained. Below extends the little city of Cholula, whose outlying plazas blend into waving fields of wheat and Indian corn. Puebla rises in the distance, and the four great peaks reach skyward in their silent grandeur. The silvery sheen of the risen moon is mingling its light with the afterglow of twilight, still reflected in slow-fading tints from the rose-touched mountain-tops, as we enter again the city of Puebla, and the scene is one of transcendent beauty.

With another day we return to the main line and proceed on our journey to the hot lands along the coast. We are still on the elevated plateau. After passing Esperanza the road begins its marvelous descent, dropping down with a rapidity that almost frightens one. As we pass El Boca del Monte we enter a narrow gorge that opens suddenly upon an elevated trestle-bridge bearing the dramatic name El Balcon del Diabolo. From its airy height we gaze down into deep-set valleys from which arises a wilderness of rugged mountains. A tumultuous stream plunges over a rocky precipice, struggles through a narrow defile, and then by a succession of foam-tossing falls is lost in gloomy depths a thousand feet below. Tiers on tiers of hills rise to meet us, yielding access as we descend in our winding, web-like way, clinging to mountain slopes, cutting through out-reaching spurs, and spanning many a yawning chasm. Ramparts of giant hills clad with rhodo-

dendrons and clinging ivy suddenly seem to bar all farther progress; then as suddenly break before us into scarred ravines and smiling valleys watered by a diamond-shower of crystal water half hidden amidst the green. Hills unseen before arise about us with opening vistas of rare loveliness, stretching away to distant mountain ranges. Down, ever down we go, our course being directed by one of the powerful double-headed engines in use on this road, and by reversing the steam-power too great precipitation is prevented. Two of these mighty iron-horses are employed to drag the trains up the steep slopes and heavy grades of the return trip from coast to Capital. Every climatic zone is measured in our descent. At Bota we leave the peach-trees in bloom; as we circle down the mountain walls of Maltrata the foliage of the tropics begins to mingle brilliantly with that of the *tierra templada*. The flaming hibiscus flowers amidst the cactus and yucca. Rare orchids droop airily from rugged branches and every-where the lap of nature is heaped with flowers and fertile vegetation. Oranges, limes, pomegranates, pine-apples, bananas and other tropical fruits, fresh picked, are offered for sale by the natives at the picturesque station of Maltrata. The vegetable world becomes luxuriant and rank as we advance. The mountains seem to grow about us, and great precipices, awhile back yawning at our feet, now loom above us as lofty peaks. On we sweep,

And in the twinkling of an eye
We brush the silvered rims of clouds,
And with them float amid the sky.

From every point the stately form of Orizaba commands each changing view, and as we come nearer and are lowered to the level of her base this queenly mountain raises her proud head into the skies, crowned in dazzling splendor, in still greater beauty and majesty. We see here a historic point where a handful of French veterans once so commanded the mountain-pass as to defeat a whole Mexican army. We curve swiftly downward to the handsome city of Orizaba surrounded by a rich little valley that is closely shut in from the outer world by high-rising mountains. Below this plain we cross a broad valley well watered and clothed with verdure, and then we enter a great *barranca* some nine hundred feet deep. A high bridge spans the chasm ninety feet above the Metlac river, along whose borders far below we see fields of corn and sugar-cane waving in the welcome breeze. Our track doubles upon itself, twists about among the mountains and darts in and out of gloomy tunnels, emerging suddenly from one of these under-ground passage-ways where a subterranean stream makes a fierce headlong plunge into the world, forming a foaming cataract down the mountain-side. Soon we are at Cordova, and in the midst of tropical heat and tropical vegetation.

The natives require but frail habitations in

this ever-summer climate, and their huts are built of reeds and cane-stalks supported by a rude framework, with thatched roofs generally cone-shaped, the better to shed the water, rain being here far more plentiful than on the uplands. Great coffee plantations spread their luxuriant growths, acres upon acres in the distance. The forests are tangles of tropical plants, and vines, and flowers, and shrubs, and trees, overshadowed by the stately palm. There is a wealth of bloom and fragrance on hill and dale, mountain-side, and deep-hung valley, growing more distinctively tropical as we drop down through the last foot-hills to the very coast. Shadows are falling athwart the way as we pass through a beautiful gorge embowered in fragrant green, and glints of light and shade play lovingly over the exquisite falls of the Atoyac, fretting a rugged way through a wild ravine beside our track. A few hours later the absolute sea-level is reached and we are safe at Vera Cruz.

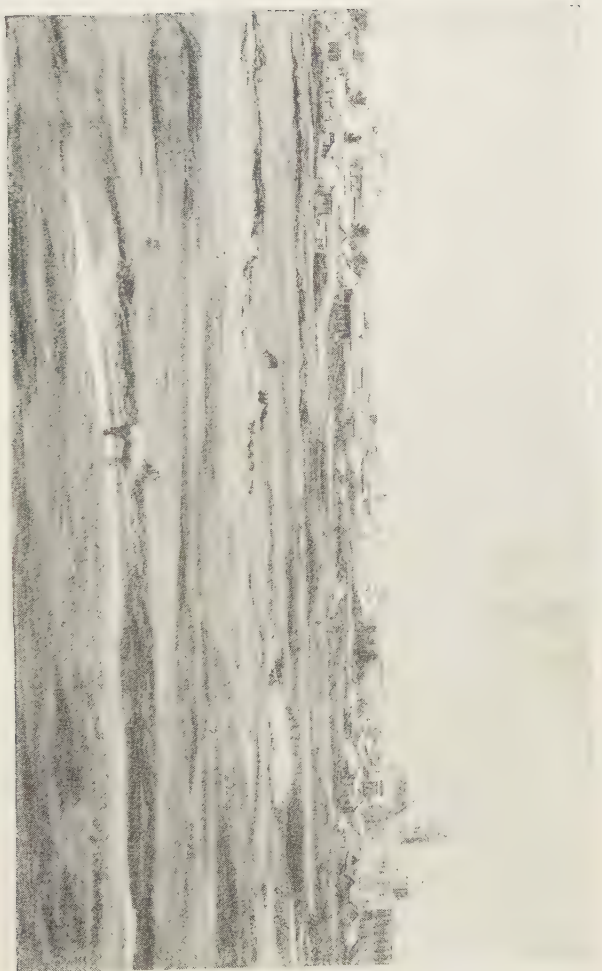
As we rattle over the streets toward the hotel we come upon the brilliantly lighted plaza, that pleasant characteristic of Mexican towns, and we linger to enjoy the gay scene. A band is discoursing sweet music, and society, in all grades, is disporting itself among the clustering shrubs, and flowers, and over-hanging trees. The air is balmy and fresh with a delightful breeze wafted in from the sea, and the night seems born of enjoyment. After studying the varying company and the graceful,

impressive lines of the Cathedral, whose stately dome and spires majestically command the square as if with conscious power of their higher mission, we seek a view of the Gulf, of which we have caught but dim glimpses down the sea-reaching streets. Beautiful indeed is the vast expanse of water that stretches away to the far horizon, and the waves roll shoreward, glimmering like molten silver in the pure light of the full moon.

Vera Cruz has few attractions to hold the tourist who has already grown accustomed to the Spanish foreignness of the country. The streets are shabbily picturesque, but flat and uninteresting, except for the abundance of flowers and foliage in plazas and courts, and the dreamy swaying of the cocoa-palm, indigenous to the lowlands along the coast.

The chief charm of the trip was a sail out on the waters of the Gulf. The day was smiling, the skies as blue as those of the far-famed Italy; nor was there any sign of a norther, although the rolling swell of the sea gave unmistakable evidence of a storm that had spent its fury, but a few days past, and the breeze was still running high enough to give us a delightfully stiff sail. The city shows at its best from the port, and its towers and tile-mounted domes are bathed in the splendor of the setting sun as we enter the harbor, and the windows catching the dying light seem all aflame.

Jalapa is the next point on our journey, and



VERA CRUZ.

enjoys the novel distinction of being reached by a tramway-ride of nearly sixty miles, leading from Paso del San Juan, sixteen miles by railroad out of Vera Cruz. The start is made at early morning,

“ When the magic of daylight awakes
A new wonder each minute, as slowly it breaks ;
Hills, cupolas, fountains, called forth every one
Out of darkness, as if but just born of the Sun.”

It is a long day's ride and tedious, but so full of novel sights that weariness is forgotten except where the toilsome mules drag us so slowly up the long slopes as to appear scarcely to move at all, and where the landscape about has for a time become barren and drear. But, anon, we have glimpses of richly cultivated plantations that are dreams of paradise, and again the vine-clad walls of a hacienda stand guard over a tangled glade of orange and banana trees. This old road was the Spanish highway to the capital before the days of railroads. Over this road General Scott marched his army to the City of Mexico, passing on the way the proud palace and prosperous ranch of Santa Anna. Here is the historic spot, but the magnificent buildings of the once great leader are now fallen to ruin and overrun with cañi.

During the middle of the day it is as oppressively hot and dusty as Fair-time in July with us; and we realize fully that we are in the *tierras calientes*. As we come into higher regions the air is cooler and the views are finer and more varied. The

road is almost constantly climbing, for Jalapa lies among the hills some four thousand feet above the sea; but, at last, with the shades and growing chill of evening we have arrived.

So much are these Spanish-Mexican towns alike, with their lovely plazas, their cathedrals, and square-built houses, showing glimpses of flower-embowered courts where birds sing and fountains play, that it is hard to find features that are distinctive. About Jalapa there is charming mountain scenery, and Orizaba is again our worshiped queen. The industry of the country round about is chiefly coffee-raising, and our trip to a coffee plantation was full of enjoyment and interest. The coffee-trees have a clustering, luxuriant appearance, and, when laden with the bunches of ripe-red berries, are extremely ornamental as well as profitable. Heat, moisture and shade are necessary for success in coffee-growing. Young trees are set out from cuttings, and between the rows banana trees are planted in order to furnish the requisite amount of shade. At five or six years the coffee-tree begins to bear and yield good profits. When ripe the berries are stripped from the stem and placed in trays or on mats to dry, after which the bean is separated from the pod by machinery. Another process is gone through with to remove the thin membrane enclosing the bean, and then the coffee is ready for the market, although age is necessary to develop a good aroma.

Large quantities of this important article of food, rivaling the Mocha in excellence, are raised in the Republic, and there is a growing foreign demand for the delicious berry of Mexican flavor. As the aroma of coffee is largely dependent upon the proper assorting and curing of the beans, a fact that the natives do not fully appreciate, more care should be given to this branch of the business. Chocolate and cocoa, or *cacao*, are largely manufactured here and form very important industries of the country; and enormous amounts of sugar are expressed from the sugar-cane growing in this climate, without cultivation, the year round. Great groves of orange trees lie on every hand, in these tropical and semi-tropical regions, the rich green of their wax-like leaves heightened by spheres of luscious, golden fruit hanging from heavy-laden branches. The banana thickets are rich-bearing and every-where abound, and numerous other tropical trees show either the promising blossom or the tempting fruit.

“And what a wilderness of flowers!
It seems as though from all the bowers
And fairest fields of all the year,
The mingled spoil were scattered here.”

It were the poetry of living to be daily surrounded with such scenes of loveliness and plenty, but hardly has the delicious existence stolen into our souls ere the prosaic activity of American life asserts itself and bids us return.

CHAPTER XXV:

HOMEWARD BOUND.

OUR second stay in the City of Mexico is only long enough for a brief and final farewell to the fair, ancient capital. As our carriage leaves the hotel a peon, catching sight of our baggage, falls into a rapid, swinging gait at our side. It is a long distance to the station and our horses are making good time, but the man keeps pace with them the whole way, and as we arrive at the station he stands at the door, with heaving breast, to ask permission to carry our luggage into the baggage-room. For this service he asks the insignificant sum of one *real*. The drivers never leave their horses for such purposes, and therefore these poor fellows are sure of their modest fees.

As the train sweeps out of the city in the bright afternoon we gaze regretfully upon the receding domes and towers until they blend with the dim horizon, and we watch the verdant Vale of Anahuac until encircling mountain-walls obstruct the scene. As we rise to a higher level a last clear view is had of the city, a last glimpse is caught a little later of the shining crest of the Woman in

White, and then Mexico is but a dream of the past. Yet this is not a farewell to this interesting country, for in the store-houses of our memories are deposited many treasures from the realms of the Montezumas that not even a Cortes can wrest from our grasp.

This our last trip across the Republic of Mexico is by the Mexican National, whose connecting links from Capital to border have but lately been forged. The road climbs out of the plateau-vale by the western mountain rim, slowly ascending the steep barriers by sweeping curves, and deep cuts, and heavy grades. Fold on fold the serried summits enclose our serpentine way, and the marvelous prospect changes face with each moment of our advance, now dimpling into deepening valleys, now frowning into grim ravines, again weeping mountain torrents over the cañi-grown crags. Below our still-ascending track we see villages close-pressed between their mountain ridges, and the rocky sides are here and there dotted with habitations seemingly hung from their airy heights as the nests of the oriole are swung from the branches of a tree. Adjoining many of the houses we notice towers, some ten feet high, used for storing corn, of which the valleys yield but moderate crops.

At Cima, the summit, we are nearly ten thousand feet above the sea, the highest point on the road and the highest railway station in the Republic. On one side of the summit the Rio Hondo

flows into the Valley of Mexico, while on the other the Rio Lerma pours its waters into Lake Chapala. Spruces and pines mingle with the cañi, and the grandeur of the scenery strongly resembles that of the Rockies. Soon we begin to descend gradually into grassy valleys watered by the Rio Lerma. A new mountain peak, the Nevada de Toluca, more than fifteen thousand feet high, rises from a point twenty miles away to greet us, its majestic head glowing under the rays of the setting sun as though crowned with burnished gold.

Twilight still lingers as we pass through Jalapa, but before we have reached the broad valley of Toluca night has fallen, and many miles of interesting scenery must be passed in the darkness. Breakfast is taken at San Luis Potosi, now rapidly becoming a stirring railroad town. Northward the grades are easy across the plateau, and not until night has come again are the mountains neared. Saltillo is passed, as also the historic point of Buena Vista, and at midnight we alight at Monterey. Like Guadalajara, and many other cities still flourishing in Mexico, Monterey was founded in the early days of Spanish dominion, and no spot more beautiful could have been found in the land for the building of a city. Having been the first place closely connected by railroad with the sister cities of the United States, Monterey has become markedly Americanized, more, however, because of the impetus given by the in-

coming American population than by any change in the business methods of the native inhabitants themselves. During three full centuries the city slowly grew and shaped itself, always in accord with the plans of its early founders; and although modern progress may engraft its foreign fruit upon the old branches, hardly can centuries of change unform the ancient tree.

Monterey is the capital of the fertile state of Nuevo Leon, and the metropolis of northern Mexico. Long before the shriek of the locomotive sounded in the astonished ears of its old inhabitants it was a receiving and distributing point for an extensive country; and its improved facilities for reaching the coast and border have greatly increased its importance as a domestic and foreign market. In the days when Texas was still a part of New Spain a rough and dangerous road, infested by swarms of wild Indians and bandits, wound among the mountains and across the plains to the city of San Antonio; and over the same old road to-day wind the bands of steel that connect these same cities, still kindred, although of two different Republics.

From the location of Monterey, at the head of the valley where the mountains converge until only a narrow pass remains, winding through the gorges to Saltillo and the interior cities beyond, it is the true gate-way of the rugged Sierra Madre. The outlook from the city is exceedingly beautiful.

Off to the north the broad plain stretches into purple distance, but the other sides of the town are closely hemmed in by the spurs of the mountains rising on the one hand into a bold peak named from its unique form the Cerro de la Silla, the saddle-mountain, and upon the other hand into the equally well-named Cerro de la Mitra, from its resemblance to a bishop's mitre.

Among the many points of interest in and about this beautiful city may be mentioned the Bishop's Palace, standing high upon a hill overlooking the town, and awakening in us a glow of patriotic pride when the story is recalled of the gallant and successful fight made up its steep slopes by the American soldiers against superior numbers during the struggle for the capture of Monterey. The hill, then wrapped in the smoke of battle, now stands out in the clear sky in the full enjoyment of peace, only a few demolished earthworks remaining to tell the tale of the conflict.

The Plaza de Zaragoza deserves mention, lying in the heart of the city and, as usual, faced by the ever-present Cathedral, and the emporiums of business and by governmental buildings. The market is a place of exceeding interest and of utmost confusion, where all sorts of merchandise are bought and sold.

Noticeable among the few palatial residences of the city is the magnificent home of Patrucio Milmo, son-in-law of the unfortunate Miramon,

whose estates he inherited. The grand hacienda of Treviño lies near and is a monument of political as well as agricultural interest. Treviño, Gonzales and Diaz were the three great leaders of the last revolution, whereby the Republic was finally established. It was arranged among these three that Diaz should first become President, to be followed by Gonzales, and then by Treviño. The first two occupied the executive chair as agreed upon; but before the time came for Treviño to become President he had married an American, the daughter of General Ord. This circumstance, it was held, would be liable to stir up jealousies among the people, should he attempt to hold the reins of government. Diaz having his own interests in view, as well as those of the country, made an arrangement by which he was given the office for a second term, while Treviño was appointed General in Chief of the Army of North-western Mexico. Common report says that he also received the princely tract of land that constitutes his hacienda as an additional consideration for his submission, and that he made good use of the soldiers under him in the clearing and improving of his estate. At that time the Constitution of Mexico debarred the President from succeeding himself in office; but Diaz, before the close of his second term, had this clause repealed, and in consequence he is now occupying the Presidential chair for the third time. Undoubtedly he is the ablest and

strongest statesman of the Republic, and the prosperity of the country under his rule is conclusive proof of his especial fitness to wield the power he has so long held.

At midnight the express carried us out of the city of Monterey, the last abiding-place of our delightful pilgrimage though the Land of the Montezumas. When we were awakened in the morning we were nearing the border-line, and soon we again crossed the Rio Grande into our own, our native land. The enthusiasm of our greeting to the beloved Stars and Stripes, the most beautiful flag on earth, waving to us a cheery welcome, was somewhat tempered by the prompt appearance of the custom-house officers to examine the baggage; but this ordeal was soon pleasantly over, and without disturbing any of the few precious relics we had gathered here and there as souvenirs of the trip.

The homeward journey is to be by a round-about course, for the slopes of the Pacific are beckoning us westward, and by the first train from Laredo we travel on to El Paso again, then across the hot desert of southern Arizona and into California. At Riverside we halt for a brief rest, and are enchanted into making a long stay in this charming place. After the almost continuous traveling for months among foreign people, we seem to have come upon an earthly paradise, and after long and weary wanderings have entered in

our own country, a land flowing with milk and honey. The valley in which this little town nestles is some ninety miles long by fifty wide, encircled by a rim of low mountain-tops lightly wrapped in snow during the winter season. In the valley frost seldom touches, but it is brown and arid except where irrigation redeems the land. Even Riverside itself was a desert until about twenty years ago, when the place was settled and irrigating ditches established, and the desert rapidly blossomed as the rose. The streets are lined with shade-trees that meet in arch-ways overhead. Flowering plants grow and bloom the year round. Rose-vines starry with buds and blossoms clamber to the roofs. Stately cypress or low evergreen hedges take the place of fences, and out the long drive-way of aristocratic Magnolia Avenue are beautiful magnolia trees and fan-palms; while in the centre of the drive wave the feathery branches of a continuous line of exquisite pepper-trees. But the charm of Riverside is her orange groves. Every house is surrounded by its acres of orange trees; and never have we seen such perfect trees. They are comparatively young, but of thrifty growth. The leaves are a rich, waxy green, without a flaw, and the branches are so laden with clusters of the golden fruit that but for props and braces they would be dragged to the earth or broken down. The budded fruit is generally preferred here and is grafted to the wild-orange stock.

The Washington Navel is the favorite early variety, while the Mediterranean Sweets are the choice fruit for May and June. Lemons, olives, raisins, grapes and all manner of deciduous fruits are grown here, although the cultivation of oranges and grapes are the most profitable industries.

Los Angeles is the metropolis of Southern California and is rapidly growing into a great city. The suburban town of Pasadena is far more picturesque. The drive thence to the beautiful San Madre Villa we greatly enjoyed, particularly the trip through two of the largest and finest ranches of the West, as well as the visit to Sunny Slope Grapery and Winery, where the finest grapes in the country are grown and pressed into a variety of California wines, whose brands are famous the country over.

The trip to San Diego gave us some bits of charming scenery. Many of the hill-sides are masses of the golden blossoms of the wild mustard, and herein revel the honey-bees of the numerous bee-ranches of this section of the state. The just fame of California honey makes this an interesting fact. San Diego did not enthuse us very much, although on every hand we heard predictions of its great future; but a day spent in yachting on the blue-rolling waves of the Pacific was a happy life-dream full-realized. What travel-loving American does not long to embrace both oceans of his beloved country in pleasant memories?

The noble city of San Francisco, with her massive buildings, her thrift, her parks, and her suburban towns, clustering about the Bay, surpassed our highest expectations in spite of the enthusiastic descriptions we had often received of the beautiful City of the Golden Gate. Surely Californians are none too proud of their fair metropolis. Nevertheless, when her most noted places of interest have been visited, and when the spring is ripening into summer, we joyfully turn our faces eastward and cross the curious country of northern Arizona, traverse the great western plains, and then——home.

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